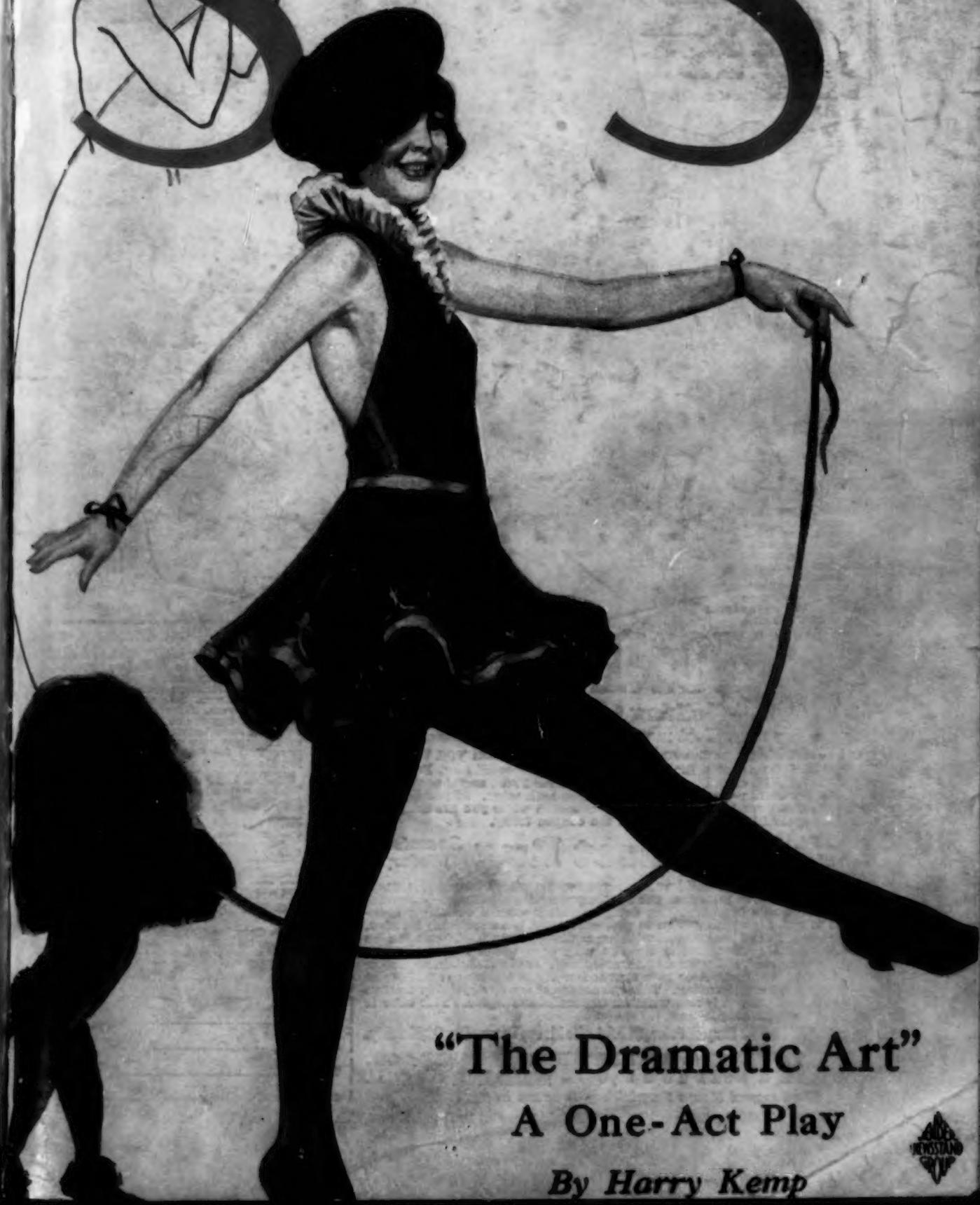


MAY, 1924

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The MART SET

V. 74-75.1



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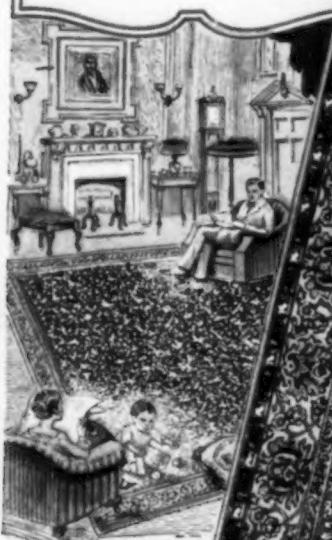


AP 2
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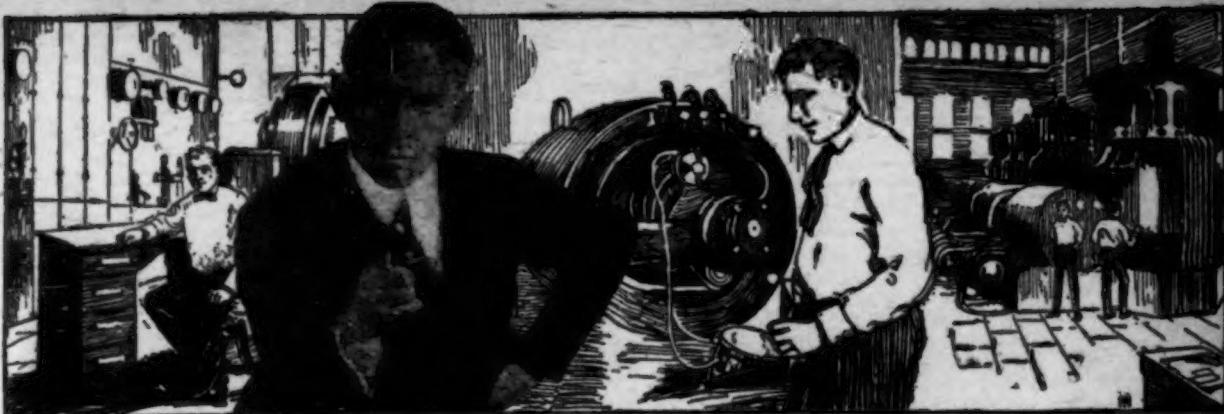
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APR 18 1924

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A radiant bride at twenty— at twenty-five—what?

EVERY woman looks forward to the time when she shall become a happy bride—the greatest adventure of her life. And when her dreams come true she is radiant with life and love, glowing with health and energy, vibrant with hope for the future.

In a few years, however, great changes take place; gone are the illusions; the rocks of stern reality take the place of castles-in-the-air. Tired lines are etched in her face; perhaps her health is impaired; she "doesn't have time" for this or that—the things she planned to do "after she was married." She is burdened with responsibilities which never should have been placed upon her frail shoulders. Physically and mentally she is growing old. Why? Because more children have come than were fair—to her—to her husband—and, most important, to the children themselves.

Marriage—the holy thing

Why do women allow marriage—the holy thing, to work this wicked transformation?

Why should a woman sacrifice her love-life—a possession she otherwise uses every resource to keep? Why does she give birth to a rapid succession of children, if she has neither the means to provide for them nor the physical strength properly to care for them?

Margaret Sanger, the acknowledged world leader of the Birth Control Movement and President of the American Birth Control League, has a message vital to every married man and woman.

In her splendidly frank and inspiring book, Mrs. Sanger sends out a clarion call to the women of the world to cast off the chains of ignorance that have long bound them to their misery and embrace the new freedom for which she faced jail and fought through every court in the land to establish.

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Two Classes of Women.
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Birth Control—a Parent's Problem or Woman's
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Woman and the New Morality.
Legislating Women's Morals.
Why Not Birth Control Clinics in America?
Progress We Have Made.

Is the Husband or Wife to Blame?

Is the husband or wife to blame for the tragedy of too many children?

Margaret Sanger, the great birth control advocate, comes with a message vital to every married man and woman.

For Every Married Couple

In "Woman and the New Race" Mrs. Sanger shows that woman can and will rise above the forces that, in too many cases, have ruined her beauty through the ages—that still drag her down today—that wreck her mental and physical strength—that disqualify her for society, for self improvement.

In blazing this revolutionary trail to the new freedom of women, this daring and heroic author points out that women who cannot afford to have more than one or two children, should not have them. It is a crime to herself, a crime to her children, a crime to society. And now, when modern civilization has abolished slavery everywhere but in the home Margaret Sanger considers it a slur upon the intelligence of American womanhood to deny to them the knowledge which has brought freedom, health, happiness, and life itself to women of other nations. That is why she has braved the storms of denunciation, why she has fought through every court in the land in her advocacy of woman's right to the knowledge that will break the chains of slavery.

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Young men can now become perfect Human Masterpieces with Tremendous Muscles—Old Men can have Perfect Health—Unlimited Vitality and a Perfect Body. You may now

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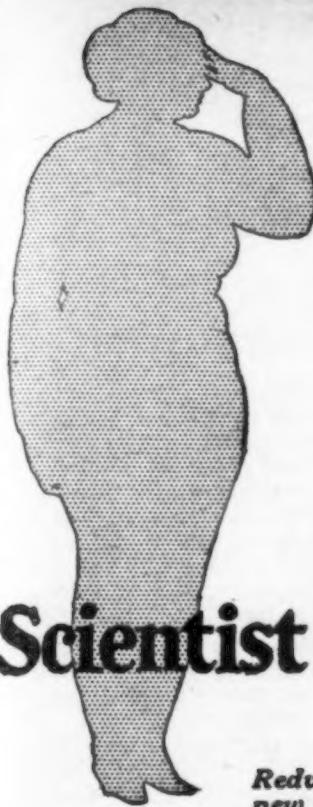
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"Lovers once, but married now." The fine old ancestral estate of holy matrimony has got 'To let' and 'Boarders Wanted' signs all over it in these parts."

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"Why pick on the women specially? They don't plunge alone. Boos says we're all sailors' wives. Every morning the 8:37 train carries away the hardy marines of Dorrisdale to their far and perilous ports of business. Their wistful-eyed wives sit on the pierhead and wave 'em good-by and pretty soon they say, 'Well, what the hell! We've got to find something to do.' Well, there's bridge, which ends in rows, and Mah Jong, which ends in permanent I.O.U.'s, and golf, which is bad for the complexion, and babies, which is worse for the finger. But the sporty little game that's always there is—to put it politely—flirtation; that's the most exciting of all and doesn't cost anything but your reputation, and not always that."

With the above to set the scene, you will get a pretty good idea of modern life as lived in Dorrisdale—the subject of "Sailors' Wives." Read about the "pettineckers," "sexperts," all varieties of four-arm exercises, as described by Warner Fabian, who sees Carol Trent as "A flame of sex in a too combustible world."

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AGENTS WANTED

Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

Along-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*

—OMAR KHAYYAM.

A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An answer to an ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, if it has not come already, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly-revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" nor a financial formula. It is not a political panacea. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—human happiness, especially in the later years of life. And there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of science where values must be proved. It "works." And because it does work—most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from disappointment and misery. Millions will rejoice because of it in years to come.

The peculiar value of this discovery is in its virtue for lifting the physical handicaps resulting from the premature waning of the vital forces of life, whether due to overwork, over-worry, sickness or the general over-expenditure of nervous energy in the strenuous living typical of the modern day. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient, "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, vibrant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization, with its wear and tear, rapidly depletes recuperative capacity, and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime.

But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages



ago a Persian poet, in the world's most melodious epic of pessimism, voiced humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of summer too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verses, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search, without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth"—the means for renewing energy and extending the summer time of life.

Now, after many years of research, science announces unconditionally that lives clouded by the haze of too-early autumn can be illumined by the summer sun of health and joy. Old age, in a sense, can be kept at bay, and the physical and mental vigor of former years again enjoyed in work and recreation. And the discovery which so adds to the joy of living is easily available to every one who feels the need of greater energy and vitality.

The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has won the highest praise in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years with extraordinarily gratifying appreciation for the success it has demonstrated. It is now put up in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, for distribution to the general public.

Anyone who finds life losing its charm and color or the feebleness of old age coming on years too soon, can obtain a double strength treatment of this compound, sufficient for ordinary cases, under a positive guarantee that it costs nothing if it fails to prove satisfactory and only \$2 if satisfied. In average cases, the compound usually brings about gratifying improvement in a few days.

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May, 1924

No. 1

The SMART SET



From the Shirt-Cuffs of a Young Man About Town

By Charles G. Shaw

\$55 a case. See Wurtzmeyer.
 Gladys—Circle 2939.
 Dinner—the Stufflebys—Thursday.
 Thirty to ten on "Knockout" Hogan with Willie.
 Maude—Plaza 1003.
 Lunch—Jack R.—Friday.
 Theatre—The Piffkins—Tuesday.
 Constance—0947 Vanderbilt.
 Opera—the Gordon-Armsbys—Monday.
 Send cable to Kitty.
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 Forty to ten on "Zip"—third race.
 Seats for Follies.
 Tea with Edna—Wednesday.
 Pay club bills before the 15th.
 Call Gertrude—Saturday.
 Collars.
 Cigarettes.
 Flowers for Genevieve.
 Week-end—23rd—the New-Voes.
 Cash cheque.

Piccadilly

By Harold Lewis Cook

*WOMEN walking
Make of streets a garden,
But such are the sagacities of lilies,
And the innuendos of poppies,
That, flower-intoxicated,
I must tread carefully
Though I am a horticulturist.*

*Let us walk closer, beloved.
Your blossoming is not for gardens,
But for some mountain top,
Far up,
In the wind.*

*Let us walk closer!
Let us pass on quickly!*



Home Again

By André Saville

WITH a shrieking of whistles and sounding of bugles, the great liner entered the harbor, and gracefully glided upstream toward its appointed pier: in a few minutes the passengers would be disembarking.

Leaning over the rail of the uppermost deck, a young man, flushed and radiant, surveyed the skyline of the city. It had been a long time since he had bade it farewell, and the familiar picture thrilled him to the core. How he had longed for that moment! How good it was to be back! But above all else, he was thinking of Her. Soon he would be with Her, telling Her of everything he had seen, of everything he had done while away. Neither had written: they had agreed beforehand not to.

A little later he was in a taxi speeding to Her apartment. Would She be in, he wondered. He had not telephoned, for he had wanted to surprise Her. Five blocks more, and the cab came to a stop. He was so excited he paid the driver triple his fare.

"Yes, she would be down directly," the maid-servant announced, and his heart beat like a sledge hammer. Each minute seemed a century. Then She entered the room.

"I'm back!" he cried. "I'm back at last!"

"That's so," she murmured, faintly surprised, "you've been away, haven't you?"

The Reward of Sedition

By L. M. Hussey

CHAPTER I

IT was, in a measure, incredible that such a thing should happen only a few hours after His Excellency had paid a visit to the barracks. From the window of the sala Antonia had watched that rather terrifying man as he appeared, surrounded by his staff, at the Esquina Mamey. General Baldomero Parra rode at his side, as huge as a centaur, and, if anything, more impressive than His Excellency.

They dismounted together, the staff followed, and as the sentinels became as rigid as frozen creatures, they entered the wide door of the barracks. Outside two aids remained on their mounts and as the horses pawed impatiently, their hoofs resounded with a metallic sharpness on the cobbled street.

Antonia slipped from the window-seat and ran swiftly to the door of the corridor. There, seated in a wicker chair near a palm in a cement pot, was doña Felicia at work on a piece of delicate lace.

"Mamma!" exclaimed the girl.

Her mother raised her eyes at once, revealing, by the abruptness of the gesture, a degree of nervous strain.

"What is it, mijita?"

"El Presidente! He just went into the barracks with General Parra."

Doña Felicia instantly dropped her needlework into a circular basket of almost white panama. At the same time she stood up and her hands went, instinctively, to her hair. This, in spite of her age, was still lustrously black, with only an occasional grey thread

running delicately through the jet coils.

"Call Felipe," she said.

Antonia stepped out into the patio and through the open door of the dining-room she could see the old servant blundering about in the corral. She called, and catching sight of her, he came forward with a kind of convulsive hobble.

"Mamma wants you, Felipe."

Doña Felicia was standing in the door, under a green painted lattice.

"Yes, señora?" questioned the old man.

"You and Maria," instructed the señora, "brush the benches in the patio and sweep up the leaves. General Rívero is coming. Hurry now, Felipe, and don't stand mooning. I should say he'd be here any minute. Tell Maria to be sure the glasses are wiped clean and also the silver serving tray. See if you can't hurry, Felipe."

The old man's beady eyes glittered and after making several convulsive starts toward the fountain and back to the nearest cement bench, finally flung himself in the direction of the corral, bawling out Maria's name as if it were an imprecation. Antonia's mother made a gesture of impatience and then hurried to her room.

Meanwhile, the girl stood in the patio undecided whether to change her frock or remain as she was. Her small hands plucked at the edge of her dress and meanwhile she told herself that it was silly to be afraid of His Excellency, whom she had known since she was a little girl. Yes, but at that earlier time her father had been alive, and when-

ever General Rivero came to the house Antonia found a secure haven behind her father's legs, where she always felt perfectly safe. Furthermore, in those days, the General scarcely noticed her. She could peep out at him and his eyes passed over her as if she were invisible. Lately he had become aware of her—distinctly. Lately, as he talked, he watched her, even when he addressed her mother.

In the end Antonia did not change her frock, but went back to the fascinating window-niche, whence she could watch the street. The horses were still clinking their iron-shod hoofs on the worn cobbles. The high, white walls of the barracks blazed in the sunshine like incandescent plates. Before the door the sentinels paced nervously, with less languor than was customary. Then, again, Antonia saw them come to frozen attention, and an instant later His Excellency emerged. He was alone.

He crossed the narrow street on foot and the two mounted aids, one on each side, accompanied him. Before the girl's home they wheeled their horses and stood with their backs to the curb. General Rivero, President of the Republic, had disappeared in the shadow of the door, but in another second the bronze knocker struck two sharp blows on the oak panels. Antonia heard Felipe slipping back the bolt, and at the same moment doña Felicia, her hair freshly combed, appeared in the sala.

They were both standing as old Felipe, bent almost into a bow, obsequiously admitted His Excellency. The great man bowed to both.

"Doña Felicia," he said. "And señorita Antonia."

His eyes, passing from the mother's face, fastened upon the girl, whom he regarded with a faint smile. The older woman observed this and a scarcely perceptible frown, the intimation of an inner fear, contracted her smooth brows. General Rivero dropped into one of the upholstered chairs.

Unlike General Baldomero Parra,

whom Antonia had seen a few minutes earlier when the two arrived at the barracks, the President was not in the dress uniform of gilt braid and blue cloth. He wore the drab field dress of a cavalry officer, trimly buttoned about his thick throat from which heavy veins stood out from a swarthy skin. His ponderous moustaches were waxed and upstanding and above a seamed forehead the close-cropped hair bristled belligerently. Restlessly he examined Antonia, whose glances faltered whenever they met his own. The girl's hands lay in her lap and under His Excellency's scrutiny, the pale fingers twined themselves together.

Felipe appeared with a serving-tray bearing glasses, a bottle of brandy and a siphon. His Excellency poised his glass a moment on a level with his glittering black eyes.

"Better times!" he pronounced, and drank.

"There's no fresh news, señor General?" inquired doña Felicia.

"We intercepted a shipment of arms at San Felix yesterday afternoon, doña Felicia."

"I'm glad. I'm very worried, señor General!"

General Rivero laughed briefly.

"There is," he continued, "a general enclosing movement taking place southward from Ciudad Bolivar and northward from El Callao. I have that in the hands of General Vidal y Goñi. I think I can trust that man—as much, doña Felicia, as I usually trust anybody! To have faith—that's a weakness. This morning my chief-of-staff, General Parra, asked permission to take command in the field. What do you suppose I told him?"

"I saw you come a little while ago with General Parra," commented Antonia.

Again His Excellency laughed.

"You saw something significant then, señorita! You see, I prefer to have General Parra close at hand. Yes—I can't part with him. Two or three

weeks from now our precious insurrectos will be caged as tight as the tiger of El Calvario. My admirable chief-of-staff will have no hand in that! You never suspected me of such fondness for one of my generals, ah, doña Felicia?"

His voice rose with a sardonic inflection, but Antonia's mother, although she fully understood, was discreet enough to murmur that General Baldomero Parra was doubtless indispensable to His Excellency in Caracas. What she comprehended, without revealing her knowledge, was that the President had begun to fear Parra's loyalty, to distrust it. Plainly he intended to keep that powerful caudillo close under his hand, here in the capital, where he would have no opportunity to turn, if that were his secret intention, to the forces of the insurrectos.

Suddenly General Rivero's sardonic leer evaporated and a new expression, a rather disturbing smile, appeared on his face.

"Señorita Antonia," he said, lowering his voice, "it's hard to believe that you're the same chit I used to see when your poor father was alive. Doña Felicia, your husband, señor Cuevas, was one of my closest friends—a fact you know well enough. I would like to see his daughter happy."

"I'm not unhappy, señor General," murmured the girl.

"Ah? But what do you know about happiness, child? How is that? Tell me, Doña Felicia, this child has grown so pretty that I don't doubt a rabble of nonsensical youths will be twanging on guitars outside her window sooner or later. Be sure you tell me about it when they begin. I'll not have your beauty sleep disturbed, señorita! I'll put them all in the army, where they belong. Patria y la Federación! Ah!"

Under the bombardment of His Excellency's weighty gallantries, Antonia's cheeks were stung to a vivid glow. Her heart beat painfully; she was conscious of its throbbing. Lately the mother and

daughter had been aroused to an identical fear, although doña Felicia saw her daughter's danger more clearly than the girl, whose trepidation was virtually intuitive. The older woman knew General Rivero from old days, from the days when he had been boon-companion to her husband. She understood that no sense of loyalty or honor would deter him from indulging his fancy for a pretty face. For a second she almost wished that her dear Antonia could lose, in an instant, all the charm of her youth—could grow old like herself and thus, to His Excellency, utterly undesired. Fearfully, she wondered what might happen if General Rivero were not, at present, so preoccupied with the turmoil of a difficult insurrection—when she observed that he had arisen.

"I must go," he announced. "I came only to assure you, doña Felicia, that I am still your servant. I mustn't neglect my excellent chief-of-staff too long, eh? Señorita Antonia—"

He took the girl's hand and like a burning seal she felt his lips pressed against her cool skin. As he released it, the hand fell limply at her side.

"Adios, child!" he said.

Antonia stood with lowered eyes as he tramped out of the sala. Through the open window she heard the beat of his steps on the street. A little later a body of horse clattered off and Antonia knew that His Excellency was gone.

Mother and daughter looked at each other during several seconds of significant hesitation. It was on Antonia's tongue to say that she distrusted General Rivero—more than this, that she disliked him, but a sense of shyness restrained her. She shrank from the intimate explanations that must follow. A similar shrinking, a dislike to discuss unpleasant fears with her child, likewise repressed doña Felicia. The older woman sighed, and turning, she went back to her wicker chair in the corridor.

A little later they ate a silent luncheon and doña Felicia retired to her siesta. This was the hour when nearly everyone grew drowsy, but today Antonia was

exempted from the usual narcotic spell. Her mind, her imagination, was too active for napping. She was thinking of General Rivero, and now her personal fear of the man was shadowed by romantic curiosities. She summoned to mind the familiar image of his dusky face, bisected by the great, jet moustaches. It was a countenance, however well known to her, that remained symbolic of fierce mysteries.

Antonia sat again in the comfortable niche at the sala window. The sunlight, intensified since morning, played like imponderable white fire on the painted bars guarding the window, making them more slender, sword-like. The barracks walls were too luminously white for the eyes and Antonia kept her glances on the shadowed rectangle of the great door. Into the shadows the sentinels had withdrawn and the girl was aware of them as drooping figures resting, motionlessly, upon their guns.

In spite of the white languor of the hour the girl felt her heart quicken with excitement. From the visit of General Rivero her life, so quiet, so secluded, seemed touched, tinctured, by some part of the romantic dangers in which His Excellency lived. Half shrinking and half eager, Antonia vaguely wished that she might step out from the sheltering walls of her home into some of the mystery of that exterior romance.

Her eyes still dwelt upon the shadows of the barracks door when she was amazed by an abrupt uproar within the white walls; the sentinels stared at each other, stood stiffly for an instant, and then ran in toward the mysterious clamor.

CHAPTER II

THEY reappeared almost at once, running. The first of the pair tripped over the curb and fell flat on his face in the gutter. His bayoneted gun flew out in front of him and clattered on the cobbles.

The other, reaching the middle of the street, turned and began to fire insanely at the door. The staccato reports of his

rifle seemed amazingly shrill in the narrow street. For an instant it occurred to Antonia that this man, that both these men, were insane. In that first instant she saw no one but the sprawled fellow in the gutter and the other madly laying siege to a whole building with his ineffectual weapon.

As he fired his final shot, however, the others were belched violently from under the arched doorway. They came out with such an impetuosity that Antonia could imagine them urged by a gust from some mighty bellows. Two or three of the first lifted their rifles and fired simultaneously at the sentinel in the street. He dropped his arms, spun sidewise on the balls of his feet, and fell on his face. Antonia, behind the painted bars of her window, screamed.

The sharp clamor of the rifle-fire, the uproar of shouting, and Antonia's cry of astonishment and fear, awakened the señora from her siesta. She came running into the sala, her unloosed hair flying out behind her like a sable pennant. She saw Antonia, who had drawn back a little, pointing at the window.

The frightened curiosity of both women brought them to the painted bars again. An engagement was now progressing in the street, beyond the barracks door. The men, all in the regular uniform of federal forces, had divided into two distinct groups and the smaller, the one that had first emerged explosively from the mysterious interior of the barracks, was being slowly pushed toward the square of El Carmen. The rifle fire was continuous; it beat upon Antonia's ears like the ceaseless roll of many shrill drums.

The smaller body of men, obviously outnumbered, and as the women sensed, those who were attempting an insurrection within the barracks itself, might have given way more rapidly were it not for the efforts of one particular youth who seemed to inspire the whole body with a measure of his own astounding audacity. It was natural that Antonia should see him as the central personage in this amazing drama. His trim cap had been lost, his drab shirt

was unbuttoned at the throat and a vivid flush of excitement colored his rather pale face to the roots of his crisp, black hair.

In one hand he waved the automatic pistol of an officer, although there were no insignia on his shoulders. Against the larger body he seemed filled with an immoderate rage. Sometimes, with his arms spread wide, he leaned forward, screaming defiantly; his voice was overcome by the noise of the rifles. Antonia felt her breath tighten, for she expected to see him fall in each succeeding second. If he were not shot down at once it was through the protection of a blessed miracle. Her frightened eyes grew even wider.

In watching the youth she failed to see the great gate of the barracks swing open. But when doña Felicia clasped her arm her eyes turned in time to observe General Baldomero Parra ride out the gate on his great, sorrel horse. He still wore the blue and gilt dress uniform and riding behind him was a body of the escort that had accompanied His Excellency to the barracks earlier in the day.

The General's broad face was seamed by the taut contraction of his heavy features. His lips were no more than a straight, hard line, a narrow cleft across that cruelly resolute countenance. To Antonia the savage intensity of the man had never been so vividly revealed. His great torso, astride the horse, seemed almost to dwarf that animal, as it dwarfed all his companions. He paused only an instant at the gate and then with a scarcely perceptible gesture of rigid command, galloped down upon the rear of the miraculous youth and his retreating associates.

With a low cry Antonia covered her face with her slim fingers. An inner vision, however, presented her with the terrifying spectacle of the horses rearing and striking with iron-rimmed hoofs. The forlorn struggle of the mad insurrectos was, she knew, over. Yes—even the rifle fire had ceased.

Antonia uncovered her eyes.

General Parra was sitting motionlessly

upon his sorrel mount, his broad face scarcely altered from its initial mood of cruel intensity. Those who remained, those who had been captured, were being marched toward the open gate and Antonia saw them tramp hopelessly through the great, spread leaves. They marched in a compact body and the girl could not be sure, could not see with certainty, whether or not the youth remained with them.

She turned to her mother. Her face was white, bloodless. And then, suddenly, with an abrupt access of hysteria, she began to weep. Doña Felicia held the child in her arms as she sobbed convulsively.

"Mijita, mijita," whispered the mother. "Don't cry now. We haven't been harmed, dear. It's over now...."

CHAPTER III

AFTER dinner, seated with her mother in the patio, Antonia's frightened imagination played with the probable fate of those rebellious soldiers of the barracks whom General Baldomero Parra had crushed and captured. Of all the agitated faces of the struggling men, Antonia could visualize but one—the countenance of the youth.

She thought of him with an emotion of intense pity. She had no conception of why he had led the insurrectos, or of his cause—this held no interest for her. Nevertheless, she was deeply sympathetic. Clearly she could vision again his flushed face, his face irradiated with romantic passion. Antonia inhaled a sighing breath. She touched her mother's arm.

"What is it, Antonia?"

"When do you think—" began the girl. Her tongue blundered with the words, but finally she managed the question in another form. "Will it be tomorrow," she asked. "when General Parra . . . punishes those men?"

"I don't think General Parra will wait long, Antonia."

Antonia nodded slowly.

"No: I don't think General Parra would wait very long. Do you think

General Parra likes to be cruel, mamma?"

"Yes, I think he does, child."

The girl's shoulders moved with a faintly perceptible shiver. Her face was wan in the starlight. She was thinking of the inevitable scene tomorrow morning. Although it would be hidden by the blazing white wall of the barracks she could imagine it with terrible distinctness. Indeed, she saw plainly the condemned men fringing the wall, sombre shadows against its white incandescence. There was General Parra, with his broad, yellow face crossed by a straight, motionless line—his mouth. The General is motionless, makes no sign, but the captain understands and calls sharply to the squad. Involuntarily Antonia's hands, flying up from her lap, covered her ears. It was almost as if she had heard the fire of the executioners then, at that instant!

"I don't even know his name!" Antonia whispered, to herself, in abrupt surprise.

It astonished her, so close in sympathy and compassion to the youth, to realize that he was nameless. She thought of several common names, wondering if one of them might be his. Neither she nor doña Felicia spoke to each other and in the patio there was scarcely a sound—only the intermittent whispering of the palms overhead when their feathery fronds were agitated by the sea-breeze blowing down from the Avila.

Antonia, startled out of her imaginings, heard her mother inspire a sharp breath. She turned, on the cement bench, and stared at the dim rectangle of the dining-room door. In the daytime, when this door was open, one could see straight through to the corral, but now the corral was part of the night, extinguished by shadows.

But someone had come out of those shadows and from the even patter of his feet the girl and doña Felicia knew at once that it was not Felipe. Then they remembered that Felipe had gone out and probably María was absent, too, and they were alone. Doña Felicia sprang to her feet.

Abruptly the stranger emerged into the starlight of the patio and when he saw doña Felicia standing by the bench with Antonia still seated behind her he raised his hands with an arresting gesture. They heard him speak, his voice reaching them with an intonation of urgent distress.

"Don't cry out!" he said. "Don't be afraid!"

Without turning her head, doña Felicia whispered swiftly to the girl.

"Run to my room, Antonia. The revolver is on the top shelf of my closet. Hurry back!"

But Antonia, her fascinated eyes fixed upon the stranger, did not move, scarcely breathed. As he came forward, slowly, his lips moving with supplications to the two women, she confirmed an incredible recognition. It was the youth, the nameless youth!

Doña Felicia shrank back before his cautious advance, but Antonia, with dilated eyes, with warm cheeks, was utterly unafraid. Strangely enough, it was as if an old friend had come to her, under circumstances of dramatic intensity. The fingers of one slim hand gripped the arm of the bench, as she leaned forward.

"You escaped!" cried Antonia.

The young man, pausing in front of her, stared in perplexity. In the dim light he peered earnestly at Antonia's pallid face. He was startled by her words, wondering suddenly if he had stumbled into the home of someone to whom he was known. But who knew him here in Caracas? So far as he was aware, he was to the whole city a stranger.

The girl must have sensed his perplexity, for she spoke a few, swift words of enlightenment.

"I saw you this morning, señor. Across the street . . . the barracks. Mamma and I were watching from our window. . . . We were frightened. How did you escape?"

Doña Felicia still wavered, a little behind her daughter, wondering whether she herself should run to her room, before this man could possibly intercept

her, and secure her husband's old revolver. But, to a sensible degree, she was less frightened now. She, too, recognized the boy, and staring at his slender figure in the starlight, she found nothing terrible in him. Indeed, doña Felicia found him—pitiful! "He's hardly more than a child!" she whispered.

What had happened to the lad since the dramatic events of the afternoon? As before, he was hatless, but now his thin face was streaked with earth and the black eyes, set restlessly in that daubed mask, seemed to gleam chatoyantly in the dusk. If there were anything to frighten one in the boy it was these eyes, never motionless, burning with a kind of fever. In other respects he moved doña Felicia to an instant compassion. His uniform was torn, muddied; scarcely more than a patch-work of tatters. He swayed a little on his feet—it was as if the slender body was sustaining a great weight, invisible to doña Felicia. Then, with a sudden resolution not to fear him, she put out her hand, pointing to the other bench.

"Sit down!" she said.

He did not, however, obey. He was under an urge to speak, to explain himself. It had been days, weeks, since he had found an understanding ear. To justify himself! That was his terrible necessity! He must accomplish that—at once!

"I wasn't captured this morning," he began.

"I couldn't make sure that I saw you!" interrupted Antonia.

"Myself and a companion—we ran down that other street—"

"El Carmen," prompted the girl.

"Down from the corner of El Carmen, a private named Gonzales and me. We crossed over through two or three squares, señorita, and came to a bridge."

"You mean the bridge over the Rio Caroata. Don't you know Caracas, señor?"

"No—the only life I know of Caracas is the one inside the barracks. My home is near Ciudad Bolívar, señorita. My name is Clemente Borjas. . . . I was

telling you Gonzales and I found the bridge and climbed down over the iron-work to the river. Someone came to the railing and began to fire at us. I saw poor Gonzales drop into the water, señorita! I was preserved. An act of the good God, señorita! He has preserved me for a purpose! God can't be content as long as General Baldomero Parra is alive! I—"

He inhaled a long breath and both women saw his fingers play convulsively with the torn edge of his jacket.

"What did you do then?" asked Antonia.

"I crawled up through the water and found a hole under the bank. I have been in that hole all day. After it was dark I came out, because I was hungry, señorita. I was so ignorant, I didn't know I was coming back toward the barracks—I was right at the walls and a sentinel called out. I didn't know there was any strength left to run, but I found I could run. I saw the wall of your corral and climbed over. You will, perhaps, not betray me? Let me rest a little while—I'll go soon."

It came to doña Felicia's mind that there was but one sensible course. This youth was an insurrecto and even General Rivero would not stretch out his hand if it were shown that she had hidden an insurrecto in her home. Doña Felicia compressed her lips. Where was Felipe? Why didn't he return? If Felipe were only at hand now she would send him across to the barracks to tell that they were holding the prisoner, this Clemente Borjas, in the patio. If he tried to escape, if he became suspicious, she would seize him herself. It seemed to her that the boy would be far too weak to escape even her grasp. He stood, silently, looking from her face to Antonia's, waiting for some assurance. It seemed to doña Felicia that he was curiously rigid.

Antonia sprang up from the bench.

"Mamma!" she cried. "He says he is hungry!"

The rigidity of the youth's body, like wax suddenly melting, vanished. Amazingly he wilted before doña Felicia's

eyes, while the girl grasped her hand in swift alarm. His knees bent, his hands groped falteringly—and with an audible impact of his body against the gravelled earth, he fell over on his side.

In the corral a lantern flashed and a rasping voice hummed a tune. Old Felipe had returned.

"Felipe!" called doña Felicia. "Hurry, Felipe!"

The old man came hurrying through the dining-room, stumbling into the chairs and dribbling hoarse oaths. Doña Felicia stooped slightly over young Borjas, staring down into his face. Yes, he was unconscious. Weakness . . . fatigue. The act of giving him up was made easier. Felipe was running across the patio. Doña Felicia shaped her lips for the necessary sentence. "Felipe," she was ready to say, "this is a deserter from the barracks. Hurry to the sentinels and tell them to come and take him!"

The old man was at her side.

"Jesús María!" he exclaimed, staring at the prostrate youth.

Doña Felicia hesitated. Why couldn't she stifle her pity? A deserter. . . . An insurrecto. . . . But he was a boy; scarcely more than a child, hardly older than Antonia!

"Felipe!" she whispered harshly, "keep your great mouth closed! Help me to carry this poor señor! Take him under the arms. To the room next to mine, *viejo!*"

CHAPTER IV

To hide the boy for a day, she argued to herself, would expose her and Antonia to no great danger. Obviously he had not been seen clambering over the wall of the corral; otherwise, a searching party would have been at the door immediately. She would hide him, during the next day, and at nightfall he could leave.

He lay on the bed with his eyes still closed.

"The brandy, Felipe," commanded doña Felicia.

When the old man came with the bottle, she motioned to him to lift up the

youth's head, but Antonia, hurrying past Felipe, pillow'd young Borjas' head on her own arm. Doña Felicia poured a little of the brandy between his lips. It relieved her to see him open his eyes.

"Forgive me, señora!" he murmured. "I was . . . weak!"

He tried to struggle up into a sitting posture, but doña Felicia, pressing her fingertips against his shoulders, urged him back against the sheet.

"You must lie quietly now," she told him.

"Water, Felipe," she said. "Some soap and a towel. . . . Señor, you're a very grimy boy!"

Clemente Borjas smiled faintly.

"My rat-hole under the bank—it was not immaculate, señora!"

His voice was scarcely more than a whisper. This betokened a weakness, an alarming debility that brought a frown to doña Felicia's forehead as she observed it. It troubled her also to see the steady flush that now burned in his cheeks. Felipe came blundering in with a tin basin of tepid water from the tank in the corral.

Before he had more than stepped through the door Antonia, standing motionless at the bottom of the bed, hurried toward him and took the basin from his hands. She placed it on the floor and soothingly, with an extraordinary gentleness, began to wipe the mud-stains from his cheeks with the end of the towel dipped in the water. Lying on the bed, Clemente stared up into the girl's face. His eyes fell; he closed them, and for a few seconds his face was invested with a strange placidity, an almost child-like expression of trust and ease.

A moment later he frowned. He stared about the room, at Antonia bending close, at Felipe near the door, at doña Felicia. His frown, it seemed, expressed an inward struggle, an effort to recall himself to reality out of the past few seconds of illusory contentment.

His eyes fastened upon doña Felicia. He spoke, whisperingly.

"You've been very good to me, se-

ñora! I'm afraid—it's better for yo
not to go any farther. . . ."

"I think," said doña Felicia, apparently ignoring his words, "that you have a touch of fever, señor Borjas. It's much better for you to keep quiet."

The young man, still frowning, shook his head.

"You don't understand, señora. I feel . . . very weak. I'm afraid I can't go on—tomorrow. You can't hide me here for a long time. Dangerous. Why should you—for a stranger? You've been very gracious! Señora, you had better have me carried back to the patio. Let me lie on the earth there. Then send over to the cuartel and say that you've discovered a deserter in your house!"

Antonia had listened with dilated eyes and now, understanding fully, she made with her hands a passionate gesture of denial.

"No, no, señor!" she cried. "We would not give you up. We will save you, señor! Mamma and I will save you!"

Doña Felicia motioned to old Felipe.

"Come here, Felipe," she said. "Put your hand on the young señor's forehead, Felipe. Hasn't he a touch of the fever?"

The old man nodded, chewing thoughtfully a moment on his gums. Pursing and drawing in his lips, he made Antonia smile, and she told herself that he reminded her of some old fish, very solemn and wise. Now Felipe shook his head repeatedly, up and down, affirming his own unspoken thoughts.

"Dofia Felicia," he said, "I have a very good medicine—"

"That's all right, Felipe! Now you can go. We won't give the poor señor any of your good medicines. Señor Borjas, I want you to be quiet. If you rest for a few days I think you'll recover quickly. I wish I could call a doctor but I don't know one I could trust. Pobrecito, I'm not afraid to hide you, child! Who'd discover you here? You could stay here for months and no one would suspect. Do you feel better now? Do you feel easier?"

Clemente's lips moved falteringly.

"I . . . I suppose my own dear mother could be as kind as you, señora! But—I can't help feeling . . . surprised. Eight months in the Cuartel de Artilleria under General Baldomero Parra! Ah, señora, that experience has made me forget that there may be kind people in the world!"

It was better for the youth, thought Antonia's mother, that he try to sleep now, and she expostulated with him as he began to talk, but however great his weakness, he was able, it seemed, to summon sufficient energy for passionate speech. General Parra! In saying that name the boy flamed with a surge of new life. It evoked a profound resentment that glowed ominously in his eyes. "What a beast!" he said. "What a brutal animal!"

It was impossible to quiet him. Sometimes, speaking with flushed energy, he propped himself on his elbow and then fell back exhausted on the pillow. But the name of Baldomero Parra sufficed, invariably, to revive him. It was at once a potent stimulant and an extraordinary venom. Clemente was obliged to speak! He must tell all that had been in his heart for months. With flushed cheeks, Antonia sat on a stool near the bedside and listened. Doña Felicia found a chair.

"It was not a year ago," he said, "when the insurrection began not far from San Felix. Señora, my father has a hacienda between San Felix and Upata. In the beginning the President sent General Parra to crush the insurrectos. . . ."

Doña Felicia nodded.

"I remember," she said. "Then His Excellency recalled General Parra. I think His Excellency mistrusts him. . . ."

"Señora," continued the youth, "my father is a very quiet man. He is no politico. When General Parra came riding down from San Felix and stopped at our hacienda he knew that. Father was very hospitable. He entertained General Parra for five days—and all the while we were wondering

Why the General allowed the insurrectos to gather force at Upata. It's plain enough to me now that he wanted them to gather force. I believe he planned to wait until they were strong enough—and then constitute himself their leader! . . . Five days after he came to our hacienda, señora, the word arrived recalling him to Caracas."

Clemente lay back on the pillow a few seconds, breathing quickly. His shallow respiration cut, with staccato gasps, at the silent air of the little room. Antonia, on the small stool, in spite of her immobility, seemed to express, by faint movements of her hands, by a tautness of her whole body, a notable ardor. Clemente's words summoned, evoked, all her romantic imagination. Vividly she pictured each detail of his story—seeing him always as the central character, the one significant player. He began to speak again.

"I didn't know that General Parra was leaving that morning," he said. "There is a village on our hacienda and two of the negroes had quarreled over a goat. Over the question of the goat they fought with machetes, señora. Father sent me down to ferret out the truth. Such things have to be settled—sooner or later everyone in the village would take sides. It was a great mess. What liars they were! I was listening to one liar after another when up came General Parra, riding with his staff.

"I said good-morning to him.

"'You'd better say adios, señor,' he told me.

"'What do you mean, señor general?' I asked.

"'I am returning to the Capital,' he replied, staring at me and frowning. It was plain he was enraged. He must have debated with himself whether he would obey the summons of El Presidente. I suppose he decided it was safer to obey. He scowled and his eyes moved about restlessly. But he never quite left off staring at me. But I didn't realize that he needed some kind of—satisfaction. Something to ease his temper. . . . I might have been more cautious.

"When he told me he was going I said polite things, naturally.

"'I'm sorry I can't go with you, señor general,' I said.

"General Parra laughed. I could see his eyes narrow. His lips curled a little as if he had just conceived a kind of small joke, something that amused him, comforted him a little.

"'That's easily arranged,' he said suddenly. 'You shall go, young señor!'

"I was still struggling to understand him when he gave an order. Three of his men dismounted, took hold of me, and tied my hands behind me. Señora and señorita, I didn't even struggle. I was too surprised for that. It was easy for them. I was like a baby! They lifted me up on a horse.

"'Go on!' commanded General Parra.

"I was riding behind him. I talked to him but he did not turn his head. At first I laughed a little. Yes, I did believe, for a few minutes, that the whole thing was a joke. You see, señora, I didn't really understand the mind of a cruel man—not then.

"When General Parra refused to answer, and we had ridden a considerable distance, I began to grow indignant. That was a mistake. I called to the señor general saying that he had singular notions of requiting our hospitality. Suddenly he wheeled his horse and confronted me. His big yellow face was seamed with a monstrous scowl.

"'Señor,' he said, 'I see that you are no patriot!'

"'I hope,' I answered, 'that I am quite as much a patriot as you, señor general!'

"'You make a most disagreeable complaint about joining the army,' he said.

"'One does not join the army under these circumstances,' I replied. 'Haven't you carried the joke far enough, señor general? I would be thankful if you would release me!'

"Suddenly he laughed. Señora, and señorita, I assure you it was a very horrible experience to hear General Baldomero Parra laugh at that moment—in that manner, I mean. You have heard

of the blood going cold? You thought it perhaps a figure, a metaphor? But, my blood did chill then—physically! General Parra stopped laughing and glared at me again.

"One fights for one's country in whatever fashion is permitted," he said. "A recruit has much to learn. Moreover, I always enjoy teaching the new recruit. You will find me a conscientious instructor. For instance, a recruit must learn the value of silence. Frankly, I am tired of the size of your mouth, soldado!"

"I naturally had no dream of what was to follow. General Parra's men understood, however. I was pulled from the horse. They stood me with my face near a tree. They pulled off my shirt and tied me with ropes. Señora—I received my first beating then!"

"Ah!"

It was at once a sigh, a commiseration, an exclamation of affright that escaped Antonia's lips. For a little while Clemente was silent. He breathed quickly. The flush suffused his cheeks like the reflection of an inner flame.

"My child," said doña Felicia, "I think you had better rest now!"

Young Borjas shook his head.

"Not a pleasant story," he murmured. "How do you explain such a man as General Parra, señora?"

He paused, leaning back on the pillow, and questioning doña Felicia with somber eyes. She shrugged her shoulders.

"How do you explain a puma in the forests of the Orinoco, child?" she responded.

"Beatings . . . lashings! His special pleasure, señora and señorita! Both of you are too kind to picture the indignities behind the walls of the barracks. I might show you my back—it tells a story. . . ."

His eyes glowed brighter.

"It takes more than a whip and the savage invention of a man like General Parra to break some spirits!" he cried out. "Not all of us were supine. Two days ago the guard of the lower magazine left the door unlocked. . . .

There weren't more than thirty of us with the courage to strike a blow for our liberty, but any chance was worth an attempt! We stole the rifles, señora and señorita. More than anything else, we thought we might . . . find the chance to kill General Parra! Yes—any one of us would be happy for that chance, although we are not murderers. I suppose—you saw something of our attempt this morning."

"I saw everything—yes, mother and I saw everything from our window in the sala. How frightened we were!"

"It was strange," muttered Clemente, somberly, "that that man should have been spared. Ah, he is no coward, señora! He rode out on that big horse and he knew that any one of us would sell ourselves for the chance of firing the fatal shot. Strange . . . I don't understand! Can there be a Providence that preserves such a man? Preserves him for a worse fate, maybe. Not one of us hit him. . . . He was unharmed. My poor companion, Gonzales! My poor friends, all of them!"

Quietly doña Felicia arose, and took Antonia by the hand.

"Come, mijita," she whispered. She turned to Clemente.

"Be courageous!" she said. "No one will find you here. Rest; sleep now. Felipe will come in from time to time to see what you need during the night."

Mother and daughter separated in the patio and Antonia went to her room. In the wall, not far from her little curly maple dressing table, there was a niche. Here stood the figure of the Blessed Mother, carved in white marble. Antonia, opening the drawer of her dressing table, removed a taper. There were matches in the drawer and with one she lighted the taper. She placed it before the image of the Virgin. Its yellow light, leaping and diminishing, seemed to give to the marble a wan pulse of life. Then Antonia knelt on a cushion and asked that Clemente Borjas might be saved from all further suffering. Her lips moved slowly, with conviction that she was being heard, with utter sincerity.

CHAPTER V

FOR Antonia all the mystery and seduction of outer life had come with Clemente. It entered with that youth into the seclusion of her home. He was, at once, the embodiment of numberless vague dreams. It was, to Antonia's romantic mind, immensely fitting that she had come to know him under circumstances of secrecy and peril. This was the romantic way; it was as if those old, whispered conversations Antonia and her confidants had held in the convent school, those confessions of fantastic desire, were about to be realized.

Clemente's fever, although they were unable to bring in medical aid, diminished soon enough, but his weakness persisted. Doña Felicia, having taken a rash course in the beginning, put all thought of personal danger, danger to her and Antonia, out of mind. Her pity, a sense of maternal pity, was notably aroused. She was as eager to save young Borjas as the girl.

So far as Antonia was concerned, she delighted in the small services she rendered him. Indeed, she multiplied them unnecessarily; she brought him cups of orange-juice to drink, cracked ice to swallow, ripe mangos, and the fruit of the mamey. She was in and out of his room like a sparrow and whenever she entered Clemente smiled.

His moods were languid, listless. He lacked, it seemed, any remaining energy for a passionate emotion. Even the thought of General Parra did not stir him emphatically. Parra, whatever he would have to do with Parra, all lay, mistily, uncertainly, in a vague future. For the moment he was content to lie in bed, to watch Antonia when she came in, or when she lingered near his pillow. Sometimes, when he was drowsy, he knew that she was near, but his eyes refused to open. He sensed her then by the perfume of the orange blossoms in her hair. He would breathe a little deeper of that scent; it was personal, intimate, caressing.

Presently the first of the carnations in Antonia's little bed of flowers

bloomed; she plucked it and pinned it high in her hair. Later she took Clemente an helado. He saw the flower and smiled.

"Claveles!" he exclaimed. "You have them now in the patio, señorita? That flower touches me. My mother is always so fond of them."

"Yes, we have them. Shall I bring you some in your room, señor Clemente?"

"How good you are to me!" cried Clemente, inspiring a luxuriant sigh. "You—and the dear señora!"

For a few seconds Antonia watched the helado soften and melt in the saucer as the youth's spoon played with it languidly. Then she found that he was watching her, and rather abruptly she left the room. She hurried across the patio to the little plot of spaded earth, but no miracle had happened. She had plucked the only carnation in blossom. The others were still in bud.

Antonia fingered the buds a moment, delicately. A little frown produced an irregular pucker between her lowered eyes. She had promised Clemente! At once she smiled and ran toward the dining-room.

"Maria!" she called.

Maria was in the corral, fanning the charcoal stove with a palm leaf. The smoke had blown into her eyes and they were as red-rimmed as if she had been lamenting the inconstancy of another of her lovers. In the Cuevas household poor Maria's succession of faithless lovers was at once a scandal and a joke.

"Let that wretched fire take care of itself," said Antonia. "I want you to come with me to the Flower Market, Maria!"

"Ah, no, niña, I can't, absolutely! Look at the work for poor me today! I'm so tired I—"

Antonia encircled Maria's shoulder with a cajoling arm. Her little hand patted the servant's plump neck.

"Please, dear Maria!" she pleaded.

Solemnly, as if with the weight of great responsibilities holding her to another duty, Maria shook her head. But Antonia disregarded her refusal.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," she said. "We'll stop at the Cathedral and I'll buy you a Miracle—not one of those silver kind, but a real one!"

Maria's eyes glittered.

"Of the Coronation," she stipulated, "with little glass diamonds in the crown?"

Antonia nodded eagerly. Then the servant looked about her hastily.

"Hurry, then," she whispered. "Before doña Felicia sees me going out with you!"

Antonia hurried to her room and threw a black andaluza over her head. It was too far to walk so she and Maria rode up from El Carmen to the corner of Mercaderes where they alighted from the street car and crossed to the Plaza. A moment later Maria received her gilt Miracle of the kind she had stipulated, and this she happily dropped in her handkerchief, feeling that its possession would bring her much good. As they hesitated an instant before the Cathedral an immaculate little man, wearing on his trim uniform the insignia of a colonel, detached himself from another officer, touched the vizor of his cap, and made Antonia an extensive bow.

This was, Antonia perceived, Colonel Juan Roldán, one of His Excellency's aids. Once or twice he had accompanied General Rivero to her home, but he was in no way an intimate of the family. The girl was at once puzzled to understand his obvious eagerness to greet her.

"Señorita Cuevas," he murmured. "A delightful morning!"

"Yes, señor Colonel."

"Perhaps I could serve you in some way, señorita?"

"No, no, señor Colonel! Many thanks. You are kind!"

"It would be no more than a great pleasure," persisted the trim little man, his smiles following each other like swift grimaces, "to do you some favor, señorita."

"You're very good, señor. We only intend to buy some flowers—that's not hard, is it? We must hurry now, Maria and I."

"If I could be allowed," insinuated Colonel Roldán, "to purchase—"

"Please, no, señor Colonel!" cried Antonia. "We have so little time! Many, many thanks. Adios, señor Colonel...."

He seemed to hesitate; Antonia was not certain that she had freed herself from his politeness, his unexpected attentions, and for an instant she thought that he was on the point of following her to the Flower Market. He permitted her to go on with Maria, however, and preoccupied, puzzled, Antonia led the way from the corner of Las Gradiñas to San Jacinto. In front of a shop, displaying a huge boot suspended on an iron bracket above the door, stood a negro turning a hand-organ while the familiar fortune-telling parrot screamed ceaselessly from a finely meshed cage. Maria wanted to invest a *real*, and receive a printed card of prognostication, but Antonia refused to loiter.

In the little Plaza El Venezolano a group of laden donkeys, at rest, wagged their ears and blinked sardonically at the crowd. The kiosko of the Flower Market, ornamented with painted Moorish scroll-work, was thronged by barefooted children in white drill, by men in coats and trousers of similar stuff, and women in couples or groups, some of them wearing lace andaluzas like Antonia, others exhibiting dull black shawls such as Maria wore.

Antonia and her companion entered under the kiosko. The girl's eyes brightened as she saw a man with the face of a brigand, his swarthy forehead and jet eyes concealed under the brim of a black felt hat, delicately arranging great bunches of carnations in tall, wicker baskets.

A bit timidly, Antonia inquired the price. The brigand wreathed his face in obsequious smiles, glanced shrewdly at his prospective patron, and answered:

"One *bolívar* a dozen, señorita. They are so fresh, these beautiful clavelitos, that they have not ceased to grow, señorita!"

"Eh? How is that?" interposed Maria, with an angry gesture. "A *bolí-*

ivar a dozen. You must mean a real, señor!"

The brigand's eyes widened with horror.

"A *real!*" he cried, passionately. "I take you to witness, before the good God, that at one *bolívar* the dozen I shall be impoverished."

"They are surely not fresh," said María, sniffing contemptuously.

"Smell them!" cried the brigand, in a frenzy. He thrust a wicker basket under María's stubby nose. "Not fresh! Oh, Mother of our Lord!"

"*Real y media,*" tempted María, casually.

"It would be better for me to cut my own throat," announced the brigand, and drew a dirty forefinger across his convulsive larynx in a gesture of despair.

"*Real y media,*" repeated María.

"No; two *reales*."

"Never mind, María!" said Antonia. She withdrew two small silver coins from her purse. "Let me have them, señor," she added.

The possession of the flowers, the accomplishment of her purpose, made her, for a few minutes, happy. She conceived Clemente's smile as they were carried in to him. But again she thought of Colonel Juan Roldán, and the frown of perplexity reappeared in her forehead.

Colonel Roldán was, she knew, very close to His Excellency, General Rivero. Seldom did General Rivero appear in public without that dapper little person attending him. They were—intimates. Could it be? A flush started, like a kindled, crimson light, in Antonia's cheeks.

Could it be, she asked herself, that General Rivero had been speaking of her to Roldán, speaking of her in such a way that the Colonel realized she must be treated with an exacting punctilio? Antonia, seated in the swaying street-car that was taking her back to her home, glanced about her swiftly. María was at her side, but Antonia's involuntary glance passed over María's ample figure as if in search of some-

thing heretofore unseen, an obscure presence, threatening, sinister. It reassured her a little to see only the passengers in front and the conductor starting at the street from the rear platform. At the corner of La Palmita she alighted with María and hurried to El Mamey.

In front of her home was an enclosed motor car bearing, on the doors, the arms of the Republic.

CHAPTER VI

SHE hesitated outside the door of the sala and heard, as she expected, the guttural flow of General Rivero's voice, talking to her mother. All the while, from the moment of seeing the motor car outside, to this instant of confirmation, Antonia's startled mind had been concerned with Clemente. Clemente! Her thoughts exclaimed his name repeatedly. Her imagination exacted the intolerable fear that General Rivero's visit was associated with the youth. To Antonia there was nothing, at the moment, incongruous in this fear. It never occurred to her as improbable that General Rivero, President of the Republic, would appear for the purpose of apprehending an obscure deserter whose very name he had doubtless never heard. Clemente bulked so emphatically in Antonia's thoughts that the appearance of el Presidente and his entire cabinet, solely in search of that youth, would not have astonished her.

Listening a moment at the sala door, however, her trepidation was, to a degree, lessened. General Rivero was talking of the insurrectos—but not those minor insurrectos of the barracks. He spoke of the revolutionary forces below the Orinoco.

"I don't distrust my General Vidal y Goñi," he was saying. "Nevertheless, the enclosing movement has failed! Completely . . . a curious failure. It's a bit impossible to understand it, doña Felicia, unless we presuppose that the plans of the General Staff leaked, in some manner, to our enemies! Ah!

There are some who profess loyalty to our government, who would not object to seeing the government defeated!"

Antonia stood in the doorway, for a moment unperceived.

General Rivero, addressing doña Felicia, extended his large hand, palm upward. Slowly, inexorably, he closed his fingers.

"These enemies at home," he said, "the enemies at our right hands—those are the ones we must first crush, señora! I will find the moment!"

He heard the quick taking of Antonia's breath, wheeled in his chair, and then with a slow smile, arose and bowed.

"The little señorita!" he said. "The little one that is not unhappy. . . . Come here, child."

Slowly Antonia approached.

"You forgot to tell me last time," pursued His Excellency, his unwavering eyes compelling her own repeatedly to raise themselves to his face, "what do you know of happiness, little one?"

"I am happy," answered Antonia in a low voice, "here at home with my dear mamma."

The General, his eyes never abandoning their scrutiny of Antonia, laughed, while he brought a great hand resonantly upon his extended knee.

"She does not tell me her little dreams, doña Felicia. Child, a diver came from La Guayra yesterday and showed me twenty-seven black pearls he had found at the bottom of the sea. I am having them made into a circle for the throat. A small throat like yours, ah? To whom shall I give them?"

Antonia was silent; her eyes fell. Doña Felicia's cheeks were flushed, but she said nothing.

"I have an emerald," he proceeded, smiling, "as big as the eye of a cuna-guaro. Let me look at your hand, little one! I have a ring—"

"The black pearls," interrupted doña Felicia, her voice trembling a little, "I'm sure would look charming about the throat of your dear Señora Rivero. We don't need to know that you are

kind, señor General. We shan't forget your long friendship with my husband. . . ."

General Rivero hesitated an instant. His swarthy skin, on the cheeks, under the eyes, darkened a little. Then, once more, he smiled.

"Doña Felicia," he said. "I am not sure that I ever had a friend. Even señor Cuevas!"

His eyes stared straight in front of him, at the farther wall.

"I have a maxim," he said. "It is: 'When you see something you desire—take it!' It is the single article in the code of my morality."

He bowed.

"Señor, and señorita, adios! I will come again. . . ."

The two women listened as the door closed upon him. Then, impulsively, with a touch of hysteria in her voice and gestures, doña Felicia took Antonia into her arms.

"My little daughter!" she cried. "My darling little child! No one shall ever harm you. No one is strong enough, no one has the power for that!"

With widened eyes Antonia rested a moment in her mother's arms. Then her lips murmured a word:

"Clemente!"

"What do you mean, mijita?"

"General Rivero did not—"

The silliness of Antonia's fear provoked a smile on her mother's lips, diminishing the tautness of her emotions.

"How foolish you are, mijita! What does el Presidente know of Clemente? The poor boy is in his room. I think he is growing stronger. I believe in another week he'll be fully recovered."

But Antonia was not content even with this assurance. She hurried away, crossed through the patio, and came to the door of Clemente's room, which stood open. The girl knocked.

"Yes?" inquired Clemente's voice.

Antonia entered. On the threshold she drew back, half a step, in astonishment.

Young Borjas was no longer in bed. He sat in a green wicker chair, near

the window; the curtains were drawn below the level of his head. He was dressed in a voluminous costume of white drill, obviously supplied by Felipe, and ludicrously too large. In those immoderate garments he looked almost fragile; his black eyes glowed intensely in the pale face.

"Señor!" cried Antonia.

"A surprise for you, señorita," answered Clemente, smiling.

"But you are not strong enough!"

"Oh, no; I'm really very strong. Bring me General Baldomero Parra into this room, alone with me, and you shall see how strong I really am!"

He said this humorously, still smiling, but his intonation, in pronouncing General Parra's name, was sinister.

"You can't be strong," persisted Antonia, shaking her head. "I know much better than that! I believe I myself could break you in two, in this way."

She snapped her fingers, and Clemente laughed. A moment later, however, his face darkened, grew serious.

"My strength," he said, "has come back enough to make me think very much of my next step, señorita. Ah, don't imagine that I never think of your danger, keeping me here in the house. You can't tell what little accident might bring discovery. If I were found here, I'm sure it wouldn't go well with you or the señora. All the time that has troubled me. More than you imagine. I mustn't expose you—an instant longer than I need to. . . .!"

Frowning, he stared at the floor.

"I believe," he resumed, "that I can slip out of Caracas safely. I plan to make the trip on foot over the Avila to La Guayra. It's hardly likely that I shall be recognized there. No, not likely. I can get to Trinidad. It will not be hard to go on from Trinidad."

Antonia was silent.

"The hardest thing, I believe," said Clemente, "will be the leave-taking from you and your mother, señorita Antonia! How hard that will be! To say good-bye!"

Antonia did not meet his eyes; her

gaze dwelt on her hands, the fingers nervously entwined, in her lap.

"And even after all the trouble and danger I've brought you," he asked presently, "you will, perhaps, be a little sorry on your own account to see me go? You've been so sweet!"

Antonia raised her face, her eyes finding Clemente's. The prospect of his departure wrung from her a word of intimate, of undesigned, frankness.

"When you are gone," she murmured, "I know I shall be very unhappy!"

"Antonia!" he cried. Her name left his lips intimately, caressingly, and then, for the first time, he said *tu* to her. "Is it true, little Antonia, that my going will make you unhappy? Antonia, it's a strange fortune that has brought us together, isn't it? A little while ago, before you came in, I was thinking of that—I was wondering whether I had to endure all the brutalities of General Baldomero Parra just as the price for knowing you. Not much of a price! Not much to pay after all, dear little Antonia! . . ."

The girl's eyes did not fall, they met Clemente's, and the bright stain on her cheeks seemed to deepen with the emphasis of each caressing word.

"It's hard to say it—just the way I'd like to!" cried Clemente. "But you must know what I feel for you, Antonia! *Amorcito!*"

His weakness was vanquished by the power of his emotions. Clemente stood up and walked directly to Antonia's chair. She was fully certain that he would take her in his arms; nothing of all this surprised her. She had rehearsed it, this moment, in her romantic dreams a thousand times. But her premonition of the moment took nothing away from its unique delight. Clemente kissed her, and then Antonia, with all her sincere simplicity, murmured:

"I love you too, Clemente!"

For a little while neither thought of the forthcoming separation. It was Clemente who recalled their thoughts to necessities and Antonia's frightened imagination conceived all the new

dangers that confronted him. Why, after all, might he not remain? He laughed a little.

"*Amorcito*," he said, "you can't hide me here forever, can you? We must discover some safety for both of us. After all, there's no great danger for me now. I don't doubt I shall reach father's hacienda without the ghost of an adventure, in the tamest way! Parra—he has too many enemies to last much longer. Soon, someone will—remove him! It won't be long until I'm free to come back to Caracas. Not a long separation, dear little Antonia—but hard to bear!"

They heard someone crossing the patio. As doña Felicia entered the room she stared at Clemente, still standing by Antonia, with one of her hands clasped in his own. Antonia ran toward her mother, half laughing, half in tears.

"Mamma!" she cried, "dear Clemente has just told me that he loves me!" She inspired a quick breath. "And I," she added, "love Clemente with all my heart!"

CHAPTER VII

IN the end, in spite of her natural fears, even Antonia perceived the necessity of Clemente's final escape. It was a necessity of which she was reminded nearly every day—the almost daily glimpses of General Parra, entering or leaving the barracks across the corner, impressed it upon her. The huge figure of that formidable man, astride his sorrel horse, or on foot, loomed as a ceaseless menace. She stifled her tears, and persuaded herself that for Clemente's sake she would be happy when he was gone.

Doña Felicia suggested that it would be easy to have Clemente driven by motor to La Guayra. That would save him the difficulties of crossing the Avila on foot. But she had scarcely suggested this when she shook her head dubiously.

"No, Clemente," she said. "There would be danger in that. It's almost

certain, with the military patrol General Rivero has established, that our car would be stopped. You might be recognized. Alone, you can avoid the patrol. Poor boy! I wish there were some easier way for you!"

Clemente laughed, confidently.

"I'll certainly be a very poor fellow if I can't reach La Guayra without trouble," he announced. "A whole mountain jungle to slip through. I'd almost engage to conduct a whole regiment down to the coast without one man being seen. Really—this is a tepid ending to a genuinely glowing start!"

"I shall never forget," cried Antonia, "that terrible morning when you and the others fought outside our window. How brave you were, Clemente!"

"Was I brave, Antonia? No—I don't think I was so brave. I was simply—enraged. I couldn't see any danger. The only thing I could see was that man, that Parra!"

"You must try to forget General Parra," said doña Felicia, energetically. "Such a man is too strong for all of us, Clemente. You must forget him in the same way that he—maybe by this time—has forgotten you!"

Presently the talk veered to Clemente's definite plans again.

"I have decided to start Tuesday," he said. "A little before sunrise. I'll be in the mountains then before it's light."

"Not Tuesday!" cried Antonia.

Smiling, Clemente took her hands.

"Another day?"

She nodded, pleading with her eyes. But young Borjas shook his head.

"No, Tuesday, little Antonia! Ah, it's hard for us both—but won't delay make it harder? Who knows but what another day would bring disaster to all of us? Somehow I might be seen . . . someone might suspect. Tuesday morning—before the sun is up."

Then Antonia made a resolution to match Clemente's courage with her own. A conviction came to her, with the force of a potent superstition, that their happiness was a thing exacted by fortune. They would be happy! She

told herself that there were no dangers they might not escape. The ardor of her romantic youth filled her with assurance, with a certainty that quenched her fears. On Monday evening she and Clemente sat together in the patio with doña Felicia near at hand. Antonia revealed her new strength in avoiding every timid word. Together, they talked of neutral things.

Clemente told of his home, the hacienda. They all contrived to laugh over his tales of the grotesque quarrels in the village. He spoke of Upata, a day's journey from the plantation, where the cattle roam freely in the streets. He entertained them with a description of the annual procession supplicating San Isidro for rain. Finally doña Felicia stood up.

"Clemente," she said, "you must sleep as long as possible tonight. Come, Antonia, let Clemente go to his room. We shall all be up very early tomorrow."

Doña Felicia went to her room wondering whether, after all, there might not have been a Providence in her rash protection of Clemente, when he came to her as a stranger. It was planned now, when news came that Clemente was safe on his father's hacienda, that they would make the trip to San Felix—unless the insurrectos were still unquelled. She and Antonia would go there—and doña Felicia knew that her little Antonia would certainly, during that visit, pass from her hands to Clemente's eager arms. Doña Felicia sighed. But her sigh breathed out a degree of hope and relief. In carrying Antonia to Clemente she would, undoubtedly, remove her girl from the ominous shadow of His Excellency. Black pearls . . . emeralds of fabulous size! A green emerald like the cruel eyes of a jungle monster. . . . Doña Felicia clenched her hands. In sudden fright she almost wished that tomorrow Antonia might be going alone with Clemente, sharing his danger. It was a danger less ominous, less obscure, than the other.

She lay down on her bed and in the

end fell asleep. It startled her, while the square of the window was still dusk, to awake with a subdued knocking at her door. It was old Felipe; he had also aroused Borjas and Antonia.

They breakfasted hastily. As they passed from the dining-room into the patio Clemente, through the partly opened door of Antonia's room, saw a taper alight before the niche of the Virgin. He understood that it had been lighted in supplication for his safety. Walking at Antonia's side, his fingers sought her hand.

"You're not afraid?" he whispered.

"No, Clemente!"

"I'm glad! We'll soon be together again, little love."

"I know we will, dear Clemente. I'm very sure."

The emphasis with which Antonia announced her new certainty curiously troubled Clemente. For the first time a shadow, an obscurity, fell over his spirit. It was not the enmity of General Parra, nor any of the physical dangers ahead that troubled him, but a thing less tangible, and thus, more distressing. His antagonists were not, he suddenly imagined, simply men like himself. Men—they could be eluded. But what of a fate, an inimical force—a destiny? Antonia looked up into his face: he was conscious of her searching eyes.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

Clemente forced a smile.

"Nothing," he answered.

He turned and took doña Felicia's hands.

"Dear señora!" he cried.

Doña Felicia's fingers played, for a moment, caressingly in Clemente's hair.

"Adios, Clemente," she said. "It's not easy, saying good-bye to you. It seems like you are my own child, *joven!*"

Abruptly breaking away, Antonia ran to her mother's room. She returned in another second, placing in Clemente's hands a small revolver.

"I almost forgot!" she cried.

Clemente glanced at the weapon. Worked into the mother-of-pearl

mosaic of the stock was the name "Cuevas."

"It was my poor papa's," Antonia explained.

Northward, toward the suburbs of Catia, the concerted crowing of roosters began. As yet, however, there was no intimation of the dawn—nothing, save this signal of awakening fowl. Clemente stiffened. Swiftly he bent down and kissed Antonia's lips.

"Adios!" he cried. "Only for a little while!"

CHAPTER VIII

In spite of his ignorance of the city, Clemente had been so thoroughly rehearsed in the course he was to take that he hurried through the streets without hesitation. The shortest course, to reach Puerta de Caracas and the trail over the Avila, would have been straight up from El Mamey through the city—but too much of the city streets was to be avoided. Clemente turned west, toward the suburb of Guarataro.

He passed a milkman, riding his donkey; the milk in the two large cans evoked a faint, metallic music. The milkman nodded and bade Clemente good morning.

The cobbled street widened into a road of hard clay. Clemente turned northward and approached the gardens of El Calvario. It was still dark; the flowering beds and the ornamental shrubbery were no more than intensified splotches upon a universal dusk. An odor of roses, however, drifted down from the terraces.

He was puzzled, for a moment, by the twinkling of lights on a distant hill—but a moment later he understood that these shone from the Military Academy on the Mount of Piety. The Escuela Militar! Clemente thought of Baldomero Parra, of the barracks, of the lash and the whipping post; his heart beat faster and his lips tightened.

But that, after all, was behind him! It seemed to him that the old bitterness had, to a degree, vanished. He

could not think of General Parra calmly—yet his thoughts of the man were less vehement now. No longer did Baldomero Parra stand as the central, the absorbingly significant figure in his life. That ominous shape had been displaced; Antonia dwelt in his thoughts.

He was approaching La Pastora. He was in the city streets again. Here and there, from the concealed patios of the houses, snatches of tunes, hummed by early rising inhabitants, floated into the streets. The dusk lightened. Ahead, Clemente saw a sinuous thread of light; it was the Rio Catuche gathering the first reflection of the dawn. Dimly he saw the trail winding up from the foothills of the Avila. He took a deep breath. The real danger was over.

Before him the ridges of the Avila arose in enormous folds of profound purple. At the moment it was only this, a pigment, a color. Clemente, stooping slightly, began to ascend.

He smelt the odor of ripe mangoes. Somewhere, among the purple jungle of trees, was the yellow fruit. Its familiar perfume lightened his heart. Outside of his window, at home, the branches of an ancient mango brought the same fruit within his grasp from the bedroom. He thought of his mother and father; it was almost as if he were back on the plantation again!

The sky cleared; trees stood out individually on the mountainside, and arid spaces, glistening ocherously, revealed themselves. Clemente stared overhead as a scarlet bird dipped down toward the city. It seemed like a vivid spark thrown up from the crimson flame that fringed the upper ridges. The sun appeared.

Clemente walked rapidly, but he did not neglect to watch the trail. It would not be difficult, should any mounted men appear, to drop back into the jungle. He might, of course, on some one of the sharper turns, be taken by surprise—but he told himself that even an encounter with the patrol need not spell disaster. Probably it would mean no

more than a question or two. It was unlikely that he would be recognized.

Within an hour he met a file of donkeys coming up from La Guayra. They moved one back of the other, nodding their shaggy heads in a dully meditating way. A man in front and a man behind urged them on; the donkeys wagged their ears in recognition of the lurid curses. They bore tall baskets filled with white and red pargos, part of yesterday's catch by the fishermen on the coast.

"Buenos días," called the leader of the file as he approached Clemente.

"Buenos días, señor," answered Clemente.

They trudged on; he was alone again.

He began to think of Antonia. His spirits, rising optimistically, led him to the prediction that he would be back in Caracas—how soon? In a month? Who could tell? Or if he could not return, doña Felicia had promised to visit the hacienda. In either way the separation would be abridged. He thought of a hundred gentle words still unsaid to dear Antonia—the time had been so short!

Would there ever be time enough to tell her all he felt?

The trail narrowed, drew itself close to a ledge of rock overhanging the valley. Then, as Clemente, still thinking of Antonia, approached this abrupt turn, he heard the beat of horses' hoofs.

Swiftly he looked about him. The nearest group of trees was seventy, a hundred yards behind. But beyond the ledge, around the turn, he could not be certain of any closer shelter. He decided to run back.

As he reached the shelter he dropped, painfully, into the concealment of the tall brush. Involuntarily his hands pressed tight against his sides.

"Maldición!" he muttered. "I'm as weak as a fish!"

The clatter of horses grew nearer. When they passed they would be fearfully close, and Clemente knew he must almost hold his breath. He breathed the air in hungry gasps, preparing for that necessity. From the noise of the

hoof-beats he tried to estimate the size of the approaching party—the number that he guessed surprised him. This was, obviously, no patrol. The patrol would contain no more than a dozen men, whereas fifty, perhaps a hundred, were coming toward him.

Clemente peered out from the brush. A mounted man made the turn, circled the ledge. He was uniformed; they were, as Clemente had feared, federal troops.

Others followed. Twenty or thirty came into view and then a donkey train. The donkeys were laden with boxes, roped to their backs and covered with canvas cloths. A munitions convoy, thought Clemente.

The leaders passed him. He could hear the words they said to each other. Some of them seemed to look straight at his shelter, but no one made any outcry. Involuntarily he glanced down at the revolver in his hand. In spite of his taut emotions, he smiled. It would be better for him to throw the revolver away. Poor little Antonia! Perhaps she imagined him valiant and unconquerable enough to prevail over a whole company—a regiment if need be!

The last of the donkey train went by. It was followed by a larger body of cavalry. Clemente's eyes widened, and his body grew rigid. Riding in the rear, a formidable centaur, was the commander of the convoy—General Baldomero Parra.

Something cried out to him, passionately, screaming it seemed, to conquer his impulses. By an effort of will he tried to fling the revolver from his clutching fingers. Let Parra go on! Let Parra pass! The voice within him implored, commanded. For the sake of Antonia . . . for his own sake . . . for the sake of their happiness. . . .

But Clemente found himself lashed to a tree again, with the leather flail cutting into his flesh. He was fighting in the street once more, and General Parra, conspicuous and invulnerable, drove the horses upon his companions. He was running toward the iron bridge over the Caroata, with poor Gonzales at

his side. The rifle fire resounded once more in his ears and Gonzales dropped into the water. He could see Gonzales' body floating down the stream, turning like an unbalanced log.

Gonzales! His dead companions! His companions who had been recaptured and shot like sheep against the white barracks wall! His sufferings and indignities! They cried out to him imperatively; they demanded the requital that lay in his hands to bestow. . . .

General Baldomero Parra rose close to the fringe of brush. Clemente raised the revolver, aimed, and fired.

CHAPTER IX

FOR an instant General Parra's thick torso remained erect, motionless. Even though his horse reared he himself seemed unmoved. The frantic thought possessed Clemente that this man was truly invulnerable. Then, with amazing abruptness, he fell off his horse and lay sprawled on the trail.

Clemente stood up. He did not know how many men rushed toward him. A dozen hands seemed to pinion his arms. He was dragged out from the brush to confront a small man, immaculately attired, with a colonel's insignia on his shoulders.

"Colonel Roldán," cried one of his captors, "this is the man!"

Roldán stared at Clemente with beady eyes. He noticed the revolver that still dangled in Clemente's fingers. He made a motion with his head and the weapon was torn from Borjas' grasp. Roldán took it and glanced at the mosaic worked in the stock. Then his eyes widened.

"Cuevas!" he muttered.

He stared at Clemente.

"Who are you?" he asked.

Clemente, his face bloodless, hesitated before he answered. What a bitter mistake! Why hadn't he flung that revealing weapon far down the mountainside, where it would now be hidden irretrievably? The name Cuevas—it revealed his connection with doña Fe-

licia and Antonia. . . . Or did it, necessarily, reveal anything? He could deny! He could lie!

"I am a deserter from the barracks of El Mamey," he answered.

"Eh? Two good reasons then why you shall not be alive this time tomorrow. You are a deserter and you have murdered General Baldomero Parra."

The little Colonel, frowning, stared again at the revolver.

"El Mamey," he said, thoughtfully. "Cuevas. . . . Where did you get this revolver?"

"I stole it from the magazine of the barracks, señor Colonel."

"From the magazine? This is the weapon of an individual."

"I don't know how it came to be in the barracks," answered Clemente.

"I think," said Roldán icily, "that you are a damned liar, soldado!"

His slender fingers tapped, for an instant, on the weapon in his hand. Then he dropped it into his pocket. Meanwhile, he stood frowning, sometimes staring at Clemente. The conventional course, he knew, would be to stand the deserter against the nearest tree and give the command to a squad. The proper finish. . . . But was that under these puzzling circumstances, proper? Cuevas. . . .

The Cuevas family! He knew his Excellency's interest in a girl . . . what was her name?—Antonia. Only a week before, while at Maracay drinking Ron Santa Teresa together, His Excellency had compared her to a small madonna. A small madonna—for the uses of His Excellency. He, Juan Roldán, must commit no sudden or irreparable error! General Baldomero Parra had been brought to a neat conclusion—but who could say at whose command? Perhaps—General Parra was to His Excellency a caudillo of too formidable power. . . . The little Colonel smiled.

"Put this soldado on a horse and guard him," he commanded.

The descent toward the city began. Clemente sat on the horse, his arms tied behind him. Now and then, on his white face, a splotch of red appeared

and vanished. Then this was the end!

But, strangely enough, he was cold, hard, and without regret. Even the thought of Antonia and his lost happiness did not move him to despair. It came to him now that he had done, indeed, the only possible act. His dead companions and his own sufferings had laid him under an injunction more potent, more compelling than his happiness. Had he permitted General Baldomero Parra to pass unharmed he would, he felt, have lived thereafter in an eternal consciousness of shame. Even Antonia's arms would not have sufficed to erase the shame of that delinquency from his heart.

Antonia! He must not breathe her name! Presently he would be shot—and there was no way to send her any message, any word. He would vanish from her life like a snuffed candle flame. How pitiable! But he did not pity himself.

In the clear sunlight he scarcely recognized Puerta de Caracas, through which he had passed in the dusk, some hours before. The Rio Catuche was now a deep gold ribbon winding into the city. At this point, Clemente was surprised to see the convoy turn to the right—they were ordered to proceed to the Cuartel de Cuño. But he, with Colonel Roldán and a small guard, was carried on into the city.

Some of the streets became vaguely familiar. Clemente looked about him with puzzled eyes. And then, turning a corner, he saw the familiar white walls, the walls of the barracks at Mamey a Dolores!

The Colonel reined his horse.

"Get down, soldado!" he commanded Clemente.

Clumsily, young Borjas slid from the horse's back. He turned to enter through the door of the barracks.

"Eh!" exclaimed Roldán. "This way, soldado! We shall find out soon who you are. I have sent a messenger to bring His Excellency General Rivero!"

Clemente stood stiffly, staring at Roldán.

"*Maldito sea!*" cried the little man, irascibly. "What a liar I believe you to be! You have never seen this house, I suppose. The revolver belonging to la Familia Cuevas would very naturally be in the magazine of the barracks!" He sneered sarcastically. "Very naturally! Forward!"

Clemente clenched his fists behind his back. Through his own abominable folly he had brought catastrophe to the door of doña Felicia and Antonia! But he must save them!

He saw Roldán lift the brazen knocker; it fell resoundingly on the oak panels. The door was pulled open—and old Felipe, his mouth gaping, stood in the door.

Roldán pushed forward; Clemente was ordered to follow. Two guards entered.

"Tell the señora that Colonel Juan Roldán sends his compliments and would be pleased to see her in the sala at once," commanded the officer.

He tramped into the familiar sala, and Clemente, urged on by the guards, was forced to join him. Near the window he stood stiffly, his eyes lowered. He heard quick footsteps; doña Felicia came in—with Antonia!

"Clemente!" cried Antonia.

Clemente raised his face; his lips were firm, his eyes cold. The Colonel began to laugh.

"You never heard of señorita Cuevas before," he said.

"Señor Colonel," asserted Clemente, in a steady voice, "the señorita must be mistaking me for someone whom she may know."

He stared briefly at Antonia.

"I assure you," he went on, "that I have never seen this señorita before in my life!"

Doña Felicia, pallid, motionless, looked from Clemente's face to that of Roldán. He, reassuming his punctilio, turned to her and bowed.

"I regret to trouble you, señora," he murmured. "Unhappily, I felt it might not be otherwise than my duty to bring this man to your home for a private interrogation by His Excellency Gen-

eral Rivero. This morning, señora, while commanding a convoy through the Avila, my superior, General Baldomero Parra, was fired upon and killed by this man. Strangely enough we found—this in his hand. . . .”

With an affable smile, the Colonel withdrew the revolver and offered it to doña Felicia. Her hands, however, were not raised to receive it.

“Perhaps you recognize this weapon?” insinuated Roldán.

Coldly, doña Felicia nodded.

“It was once,” she answered, “the property of my husband. You can see his name worked on the stock.”

“So I saw,” answered the Colonel, still smiling.

Antonia following Clemente’s declaration, had walked toward a chair. She was seated now, her jetty eyes enormously expanded, her cheeks alternately vivid and pale. She did not speak.

There was an interval of silence.

It was interrupted by the noise of a motor in the street. Colonel Roldán stepped to the window and peered out.

He turned toward doña Felicia again. “His Excellency!” he announced.

CHAPTER X

GENERAL RIVERO listened moodily to Colonel Roldán’s story of Parra’s death. He stared at the revolver and tossed it on the table.

“Señor General,” said Roldán, “you will perhaps instruct me as to the course I am to pursue with . . . with this señor.”

He pointed toward Clemente.

“Under the circumstances,” he went on, with delicate insinuation, “I hesitated to take—what would have been the customary steps.”

He was silent. General Rivero’s heavy fingers tapped against his puttees. He glanced up from his chair, frowning.

“Colonel,” he said, “kindly withdraw with the guards into the patio.

The Colonel saluted, bowed to doña

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Felicia and Antonia, and marched out, followed by his men.

General Rivero stood up. He faced doña Felicia.

“Who is this boy, doña Felicia?” he asked.

“Señor General,” interrupted Clemente, “it is needless to trouble either this señora or señorita with questions. Neither of them has ever seen me before. As to the revolver, I don’t know how it came to be among the barracks stores. Perhaps it was found in some way and put there. I admit shooting General Parra. Given the opportunity, I would do the same thing again. I am quite ready for the penalty.”

“No, no!”

It was Antonia, despairing, pleading, whose lips had wrung the words from her tormented heart. She sprang up, her white face drawn, terrified. His Excellency stared at her and then, slowly, sardonically, he smiled.

“Very well,” he said. “I shall order you to the barracks to be shot.”

“You can’t!” cried Antonia. “You must free Clemente, señor General! He is lying, lying for my sake and poor mamma’s. I know him, I know him! He is dear to me! He is my dearly beloved!”

Sobbing she rushed toward Clemente, clasped him in her arms, covering his cheeks with kisses. She kneeled at his side, and with feverish fingers released his bonds. Clemente, motionless, stood with his hands at his sides.

General Rivero still smiled.

“Doña Felicia,” he asked, “will you permit me to question these two alone?”

The mother hesitated. Then, slowly, she turned to the door and passed out into the corridor.

General Rivero slowly approached Antonia, where she stood at Clemente’s side.

“Little señorita,” he said, “I never at any time saw you more bewitching! You have become a woman at last. You are no longer a child. A very lovely woman, little Antonia! I won-

der—what sort of happiness you could bring me?"

He paused, smiling, devouring the girl with his avid eyes. Then his glance turned to Clemente.

The youth was still motionless, but to his arms, his shoulders, to his whole body there was a flexed rigidity of the tiger in the movement before his spring. General Rivero's eyes passed over the youth and his smile widened.

He shrugged his heavy shoulders; he made with his hands a brusque, disquieting gesture.

"Happiness! . . . Probably I am wrong. You are, after all, only another one, señorita Antonia. Another little girl. In the end you would disappoint me. Ah?"

He drew back. He looked again at Clemente.

"Boy," he asked, "what would you have done if I had taken the little señorita into my arms just now?" he asked.

"Señor General," replied Clemente, his voice incredibly hard, "I had a weapon for General Baldomero Parra. For you—my bare hands would have sufficed! Had you touched señorita Cuevas, I would have choked the life out of you with my bare hands!"

A dull flush mounted His Excellency's cheeks. For an instant his dusky eyes blazed ominously—and then, suddenly, he began to laugh. His laughter reverberated horribly through the length of the sala; it beat back upon him from the ceiling and the walls.

"Mother of God!" he cried. "You are not without courage, ah, *joven!* Under other circumstances I might be inclined to test you. You and I alone in this room—with nothing but our own strength. You think you would prevail because you are right! No, no, *joven!* You might be as right, as just as all the heavenly angels—but I would certainly kill you. As surely as the sun will rise tomorrow! Remember this, *joven*—if ever in your life you must choose between two causes, make your

choice for the strong. The strong is always the just. . . ."

He paused.

"Another time," he said, presently. "Another time, señor Intrépido! Frankly, I have no wish to be your enemy now. Do you realize—that you have done me an immense service? An immense service—this morning?"

"I don't," answered Clemente, "understand you, señor General!"

"No? Perhaps not! Well, imagine this, *joven*. Imagine that I have a certain General on my staff who commands, in his own right, a powerful following. Do you understand? It is difficult to remove him—but he is to me a threat, señor Intrépido! I even have evidence that he intrigues against me. Nevertheless, with the other insurrectos on my hands, I cannot risk his immediate disaffection . . . his open disloyalty."

General Rivero paused, smiling.

"Suppose," he continued, "a silly youth like you, for God knows what reason, decides he would rather be shot down like a rat himself than permit this excellent General of mine to draw another breath of life? Eh, what about that, señor Intrépido? What would I do to that insane youth if he should happen to shoot my General? Kill him, ah? What would I do then?"

Clemente remained silent. Antonia's wide eyes remained unwaveringly on His Excellency's dusky face.

"I think," said His Excellency, replying to his own question, "that I could do no less than one thing—I could do no better than leave that youth—to his illusions!"

Abruptly General Rivero made Clemente an exaggerated bow. He passed out through the door, closing it behind him.

Antonia and Clemente were alone.

"Does he mean," cried the girl, "that you are—free, Clemente?"

"Yes," answered Clemente, suddenly taking her in his arms. "I believe that is what he means. Antonia! He means that I am free to love you, cherish you, my Antonia, *mi amor!*"²

Notes on Personalities

V—Ben Hecht

By David Karsner

ONE can well imagine the lion tamer, who is as certain of life as the sexton is of death and equally as optimistic about the result, having decisive qualms for the safety of Ben Hecht, who was an acrobat in a mid-western circus during one of his early incarnations. Hecht was probably as incorrigible then as he is now. One can imagine him doing ten swift rotations with his left foot on the trapeze, and bringing down the tent with applause and admiration as he does a screw somersault landing upright on the glossy back of the pink-eyed white horse.

Ben Hecht has brought to his books many of the trapeze tricks he learned at the sawdust tracks. He has remained the performer in his novels. He can probably do more tricks with a sentence than any man of the Chicago group of writers, among whom he is looked upon with awe and admiration. Take any simple sentence, submit it to Hecht and he will impart to it the velocity of a pinwheel. Chicago may have something to do with that.

Ben Hecht was a journalist de luxe in Chicago several years before his first novel, "Erik Dorn," appeared in 1921, but with the publication of that book his reputation flew out of the windy "Loop," hurdled Lake Michigan, defied the dunes of Indiana, spanned the oasis of Ohio, pierced the pines of Pennsylvania and stung the ears of complacent New York with the glad tidings of great joy that a new Napoleon of western letters had

arrived. If the furor that "Erik Dorn" aroused was a mere press agent's trick then Harold Bell Wright has been wasting his money. But it wasn't. The novel, a romance of a disillusioned man's futile search for ecstatic expression, was one of the most brilliant performances in a year noted for its brilliant work.

Aside from Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson and Gertrude Atherton, Hecht is possibly the only American writer of the present modern school to have achieved the dignity of the Modern Library classics among which "Erik Dorn" finds permanent refuge from its prurient assailants and vehement defenders.

It does seem a little incongruous to find Hecht sheltered by the same stately robes that clothe Thomas Paine, the tales of Chekhov, Strindberg, Anatole France, the State Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Samuel Butler and Havelock Ellis. It is something like a small boy strutting up-stage in his father's plug hat. Still, I attempt no invidious comparisons. If "Erik Dorn" doesn't match the genius of Frank Norris's "McTeague" (likewise honored), it may certainly share the shelf with "Winesburg Ohio," without shading Anderson so much as a jot.

* * *

I emphasize "Erik Dorn" because it is the one book of Hecht's five published volumes that has accounted for his reputation beyond the Stock Yards, and because it is virtually the

summation of Hecht himself. I can think of no American writer whose work is so definitely a reflection of his own personality. One or two of his later books have brought him notoriety, but they have not increased his literary stature.

Hecht was only thirty-one when he found himself famous in 1921 with "Erik Dorn." He became notorious in February, 1924, when a jury in the Federal Court in Chicago found him guilty of writing an obscene book in "Fantazius Mallare," an attempt at a scathing attack upon the sexual hypocrisy of society through an analysis of insanity via an inhibited artist, an amorous gypsy girl, and a black dwarfed idiot. The court fined Hecht and the incomparable artist, Wallace Smith, who illustrated his weird fantasy, which was privately printed, \$1,000 each. There are pages of stark beauty and splendid imagery in the story of "Fantazius Mallare," to which Hecht supplied, by way of an introduction, one of the most violent and therefore puerile assaults upon the cosmos that could possibly be contrived by any man with one grain of humor, to say nothing of intellectual proportion.

From my point of view, Hecht imposed very harshly upon the friends of the uncensored word in his foreword to "Fantazius." If that is art then so are the nasty words scribbled on billboards by unhealthy children who have heard from elders only their vilest implications. Heaven forfend that I should acquiesce in the findings of an American jury except when it awards damages to a window cleaner's widow, but I don't see why a writer shouldn't preserve his own good manners in his book the same as he would in his parlor with guests. A writer's readers are his transient guests. He doesn't have to patronize them, nor even indorse them, but to offend them with nasty writing is as outrageous as kicking a bishop in the midst of prayer. I say this, yet despising every social,

political, economic and literary headsman, heresy-hunter and witch-burner from Torquemada to the most recent Tommy Tittlemouse.

If my criticism of what I conceive to be Ben Hecht's literary manners be treason to the untrammeled expression of American letters, then I may only echo that almost forgotten 100 per cent American and let Mr. Sumner and Justice Ford make the most of it.

* * *

A second novel, "Gargoyles," followed "Erik Dorn." It is a feeble novel, but brilliant reporting of a drab, colorless, group of sensual American go-getters, each definitely afflicted with an acute case of complex *sexualis*, quite simple once the reader comprehends the bed-level mediocrity of the characters that smirk through the pages. There is in "Gargoyles" a part of an earlier novel that Hecht wrote before he had published anything except fugitive pieces here and there. More than once a man's more mature work has been confounded by his vanity to preserve for exploitation his earlier writing. It is too bad. Maybe writers should never save their earlier writings, or painters their first canvases. "Fantazius Mallare" also appeared in 1922 along with "1001 Afternoons in Chicago," a collection of sixty-odd vignettes and sketches written for the *Chicago Daily News*, and as fine a journalistic performance of its kind as was ever done in this country. In this book, gorgeously illustrated with grotesque marginal drawings and full page designs by Herman Rosse, Hecht happily has forgotten his Dostoiefsky, his de Gourmont and his Huysmans—the triumvirate of his idols—and produced a volume as charming and as colorful as could be contrived from the wealth of material at hand in Chicago's streets. There is no similarity between his "Afternoons" and his novels. Consider this from "Fog Patterns":

"The fog tiptoes into the streets.

It walks like a great cat through the air and slowly devours the city. The office buildings vanish, leaving behind thin pencil lines and smoke blurs. The pavements become isolated, low roof corridors. Overhead the electric signs whisper enigmatically and the window lights dissolve. The fog thickens till the city disappears. High up, where the mists thin into a dark sulphurous glow, roof bubbles float. The great cat's work is done. It stands, balancing itself on the heads of people and arches its back against the vanished building."

A street-walker is arrested. A policeman, swaggering his authority and virtuous in his *malehood*, drags Fanny before the judge, who wears his virtue like the policeman wears his badge. He is, however, more magnanimous. He'll give Fanny another chance. Hecht turns the scene.

"Now one can follow Fanny. She walks out of the courtroom. The street swallows her. Nobody in the crowd knows what has happened. Fanny is anybody now. Still, one may follow. Perhaps something will reveal itself. Something will add an illuminating touch to the incident in the courtroom. There is only this. Fanny pauses in front of a drug store window. The crowds clutter by. Fanny stands looking, without interest, into the window. There is a little mirror inside. The city tumbles by. The city is interested in something vastly complicated. Staring into the little mirror, Fanny sighs and powders her nose."

Michigan Avenue he calls a "deplorable street, a luxurious couch of a street in which the afternoon lolls like a gaudy sybarite. Overhead the sky stretches itself like a holiday awning... A deplorable street, a cement and plate-glass Circe. We walk—a long procession of us. It is curious to note how we adjust ourselves to backgrounds... Here the sun bursts a shower of little golden

balloons from high windows... We walk like Pierrots and Pierrettes, like John Drews and Jack Barrymores and Leo Ditrichsteins; like Nazimovas, Patricia Collinges and Messalinas on parole... This magician of a street has created an illusion in our heads that there are adventure and romance around us... There are two lives that people lead. One is the real life of business, mating, plans, bankruptcies and gas bills. The other is an unreal life, a life of secret grandeur which compensates for the monotony of the days."

* * *

It is conceivable that a man may do his very best writing in the exacting stress of a daily newspaper column. He is recording history, time and place and the drift and drive of crowding hours, and making articulate the city's authentic cadences and cacophonies.

In my opinion Ben Hecht wrote literature in his newspaper pieces if he ever wrote it anywhere. Perhaps he won't like that, for anyone who has written one novel prefers the epaulets of a novelist to the chevrons of a columnist. But after all, that preference is only one of the craft's traditional artifices. Good writing, it seems to me, as the sole criterion, regardless of its form.

Before Hecht was known to the public, early, when he had written a dozen or so one-act plays, several of which were produced by small theater groups. After he became a celebrity he wrote a full length play, "Under False Pretenses," also called "The Egotist," a comedy of theater life acted by Leo Ditrichstein, first in San Francisco, brought east to Chicago where Hecht's local fame aided it mightily, and then to New York where it went into eclipse after a brief run. The play, like the novels, is in Hecht's first formula. He has not differed from it except in his "1001 Afternoons."

Ben Hecht was born in New York City, but was taken to Racine, Wis-

consin, where he attended high school. At the age of eighteen he was an acrobat in Costello's road show in a small Western town. He drifted to Chicago and became a reporter. He was one of the best in that city or anywhere else.

In the summer of 1918 I went to Chicago from New York to report a great labor trial involving 125 indicted crusaders led by William D. Haywood, engaged in the fantastic fight for social justice and peace. Imagine that happy combination! Never was more drama enacted in an American courtroom, with that whilom prince of American actors, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, playing "heavy" with Haywood. Of course Hecht was there at the press table. I sat next him for about two weeks. He wasn't famous then. He possessed only a reputation among his fellow craftsmen as the "brilliant star reporter." Such is the ultimate honor of newspaper men, and even that little is bequeathed to few. Newspapers murder genius, sneer at talent and glorify mediocrity. That is why they are successful. They are the absolute reflectors of the deadly average, and are at the same time almost the one honest public institution here or anywhere, in that they do not pretend to be other than reporters of man's majestic failure and his stupid success. Between those poles, wind in the vacuum. There are exceptions only to prove the rule.

Hecht was more interested in the color of that trial, which lasted five months, than in its import or in what it portended. I soon learned from him that he has no interest in changing the form of government here or anywhere. That he was impatient with crusaders, but he did confess "a contempt for the ideas of man, an infatuation with the energies of man, a love for the abstraction of form, a loathing for the protective slave philosophies of the people, government, etc.; a determination not to

become a part of the mind which the swine worship in their sty."

Still one finds Hecht working many hours over the union scale to become a first-rate iconoclast. I surmise that is as arduous a job as trying to be the most affable Rotarian. One imagines Hecht as being influenced more by what he has read than by what he has lived. One day he was discussing his views with a fellow reporter.

"I am at heart a man of peace. I am even a moral man. Why not? A man must be moral to live and preserve contacts under existing conditions; and I have no suicidal notions. Morality is the line of least resistance; and anyway—a shining radical mark is always kinda ludicrous. But these laws, taboos and conventions that dictate my manners don't reach into my mind."

* * *

Edward J. O'Brien gave Ben Hecht his first recognition outside of Chicago by including one of Hecht's short stories in his 1915 Anthology.

In 1923, Hecht's latest book arrived, "The Florentine Dagger," a detective story, which he is supposed to have written in one day of eighteen hours or so. More acrobatics!

With Maxwell Bodenheim, the difficult novelist, he edits the *Chicago Literary Times*, a weekly devoted to chanting the praises of the iconoclasts and tub-thumping others—a sheet of sometimes brilliant satire, mostly negative, and often a bit tiresome.

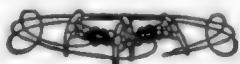
Hecht is writing too fast and not thinking deeply. He can turn a phrase as few writers can do it. Which proves an agile vocabulary, but doesn't vouchsafe an artist. He is a splendid human being and doubtless his wife thinks likewise. Ben Hecht is quite as charming and as colorful a conversationalist as he is a writer. I shall always want to remember the half-hour chats I had with him during the recesses of that

interminable trial. If I were one of sufficient import to speak to a novelist as a fellow craftsman, I would ask Ben Hecht to forget Remy de Gourmont for ten years and try to remember that the First Man and the First Woman were sexed some billions of cycles before the last star foretold the advent of Freud.

Hecht's ascendancy in literature, as such things go, has not been difficult, it appears. I would say he has

merited his fame and whatever fortune it has brought him. Ben Hecht has two obsessions: (1) the belief that he has legions of enemies that persecute him; (2) his burning desire to be different from all other Americans.

When the Department of Justice arrested Hecht for "Fantazius Mallare," Hecht commented: "I am very grateful it is the federal government and not my Chicago."



Heine to Heine

By Basil Thompson

THOUGH I would spare you all the hurt I can,
I would be more a demon, less a man
To keep from you this despicable side
Of my dark nature. However I may hide
The fact, that there is in me perverseness of a sort
That fouls the soul and withers up the heart
And tears the tendons of the character apart.
I am a canker festering in a rose.
I am a rose decaying in a tomb.
I am a tomb some evil spirit chose
To make his haunt. I am that imp of doom
Who knows he dreams and dreaming, dreams he knows
The scheme of things, the pattern, and the plan.
Though I would spare you all the hurt I can,
I would be more a demon, less a man.



New York, U. S. A.

By Charles G. Shaw

ITALIAN table d'hotes . . . French dressmakers . . . English art dealers . . .
German delicatessen stores . . . Chinese laundries . . . Swiss jewelers
. . . Russian singing . . . Swedish masseurs . . . Turkish cigarettes . . .
Hungarian music . . . Japanese prints . . . Irish wakes . . . Egyptian hair
cuts . . . Canadian liquor . . . Spanish dancers . . . African jazz.



ALL women are actresses. And all men are Johns.

The Modern Age

By John Torcross

IT was only a glimpse of the face he had caught, but it had been quite enough to start the memory cells in his brain working. Dim, forgotten pictures of a distant day passed hazily before him, but for the life of him he couldn't remember the name, the place, nor the occasion. It was all so aggravating. That curve to the mouth, that drooping of the eyelids, that trick of wearing the veil. . . .

It is quite true it was only a flash as the cab shot past, but it had been all that was necessary to rekindle a dormant spark that had seemed completely extinguished among the ashes of the past. But where? when? who? he kept repeating to himself.

Could it have been one summer during that mad season at the Lido? Or had he known her in some pale, romantic haunt under an amorous moonlight? Perhaps, it had been only in his dreams. It was such a familiar face, and yet—such a difficult one to recall. Surely it was most exasperating.

Then, suddenly, he remembered! It was Julia! dear Julia. Julia who had divorced him last winter.



A Song for the Makers of Song

By Harold Crawford Stearns

SONG is our bread,
Song is our wine;
Tables are spread—
Let us dine!

Lanterns are moons,
Candles are stars. . . .
Poets make tunes
Out of scars.

Elves' eyes are brown,
Roses have ears. . . .
Some poets drown
In their tears.

Song grinds the mill,
Song reaps the wheat;
Life pays the bill—
Let us eat!

The Dramatic Art

[A Viennese Fantasy]

By Harry Kemp

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

HEINRICH MONDENSHEIN—Master of the Dramatic Art

ARMAND—His Servant

HULDA JOKAI—A Prospective Star

TIME OF ACTION—The Present

PLACE OF ACTION—Studio of Heinrich Mondenschein in the
theatrical district of Vienna

The studio walls are hung with figured tapestry. The only superfluous bit of ornamentation is a half-life-size figure of Christ on the cross. This figure is of exquisite workmanship and an indubitable antique. The light that plays over its brown ivory form gives it a singular life-like beauty. It sets back in a sort of alcove, at the left; to the right, at the back, stands an antique cabinet.

MONDENSHEIN sits at a table half-facing the audience. There stands another and larger chair across the table. These three pieces of furniture are of rare wood—the same wood as that of which the cabinet is made. Back of MONDENSHEIN is a small bookcase. At the rise of the curtain, MONDENSHEIN is discovered talking to ARMAND, his servant. ARMAND is a big, square-headed man, built like a pugilist, and unmistakably Bulgarian. His name fits him about as well as a Seville fan would fit into the languorous hand of a Jack Dempsey. He shows an ignorant, affectionate reverence for his master that is almost worship.

MONDENSHEIN himself presents an extraordinary appearance. He, too, is a great hulk of a man. His hair is almost gone, but the little that is left is carefully plastered down. He has a complexion of baby pink. His eyes are large and very dark blue. They have tired wrinkles about them . . . otherwise the man's face is as smooth as the table at which he sits writing, save for the veriest trace of a stubble moustache. To recur to his eyes—they seem to crackle when he is animated and interested in what he is saying—but at times, when he remembers himself, hard surfaces of calculation play over them.

MONDENSHEIN :

(Looking up from where he is sitting, to ARMAND.) How long has the young lady been waiting, Armand?

ARMAND :

(With a broad country accent.) About two hours, Mr. Henry.

MONDENSHEIN :

That's hardly long enough . . . but show her up!

ARMAND :

Yes, Mr. Henry.

(As ARMAND exits by the door in the back, MONDENSHEIN hurriedly rises

and goes over to the cabinet, opens it, and takes out an eye-drop syringe. He puts a drop of oil in each eye to make them seem more brilliant. Then, as the girl is heard approaching, in some mysterious way, a church organ starts playing some such solemn melody as "Ase's Tod" . . . very softly. . . . He returns swiftly to table, rapidly reseats himself, takes up pen, and resumes writing.)

ARMAND:

(Unseen, without.) Step right in! . . . this way, Miss! (The door is opened and HULDA JOKAI enters. The door is then softly drawn to behind her. The girl is a little over middle height. She has an easy walk, and she possesses a manner which is a strange mixture of diffidence and self-confidence.

Her face is very beautiful. It is of an extraordinary pallor, like white, new ivory. She has great, violet eyes, fringed with long lashes. Her one artificiality is an incessant drooping of these lashes along the cheek. She has been told that this makes her look like the Madonna in girlhood. And one must not forget her hair. It is superbly, riotously, abundant, and so black as to give forth purple glints under the light.

She steps into center of the stage and stands there, close to table. MONDENSHEIN lets her stand a full five minutes, affecting not to have become aware of her presence.)

HULDA JOKAI:

(Timidly, to attract his attention and make him aware of her presence.) H'm!

(MONDENSHEIN, still not looking up, writes on in simulated absorption. He leans back to read over a page of MSS. which he has just finished. . . . Then pretends to become accidentally aware, for the first time, of the girl's presence.

The slow organ music dies out.)

MONDENSHEIN:

(Briskly.) Well, young lady, what

do you want? What can I do for you? How did you get in here?

HULDA JOKAI:

(Extremely embarrassed at the volley of questions.) I had—I had—an appoint—

MONDENSHEIN:

An appointment? With whom?

HULDA JOKAI:

(Recovering.) Why, with you, Mr. Mondenschein.

MONDENSHEIN:

With me? . . . There must be some mistake. . . . Wait a minute . . . maybe you're right, after all. . . . I'll call my secretary and find out. (At the phone.) Hello, Dangelspurg . . . who let this young lady by? (A pause while he listens to reply. Resuming.) Oh, I see . . . yes, this is Friday . . . I thought it was Thursday. . . . (Hanging up receiver. To HULDA JOKAI.) You are right. You have got an appointment with me. I'm so busy I forgot what day it was. I'm rewriting one play and rehearsing two others at the same time, you see,—and so I'm kept flying about day and night.

HULDA JOKAI:

I'm sorry I interrupted . . . perhaps I'd better go and call again. . . .

MONDENSHEIN:

(With ill-concealed eagerness . . . feeling that he has overplayed.) No! No! (Steadier.) Now that you are here you might as well stop and get it over with . . . sit down. (He walks quickly across the floor, and draws up a chair for her.)

HULDA JOKAI:

(Seating herself.) Thank you, sir! (She rests her hands on the arms of the chair. The hands are exquisitely formed, but rather too tenuous, if anything. She betrays a tendency to neurosis by the way she flickers her fingers on her knees or on the arms of the chair.)

MONDENSHEIN:

And now, what can I do for you?

HULDA JOKAI:

I want a chance to act. . . . I want the privilege of sitting at your feet and learning the dramatic art, from a great master of it.

MONDENSHEIN:

(Gratified.) Ah, young lady, many—

HULDA JOKAI:

(In her eagerness, hurriedly breaking in.) Please don't refuse me. I have endured so much, I have made so many sacrifices, just to get here to see you. . . . You've no idea, sir—

MONDENSHEIN:

(Interrupting with pretended impatience.) Yes. Yes. But have you had any experience?

HULDA JOKAI:

O, yes, I—

MONDENSHEIN:

Exactly what, to be explicit.

HULDA JOKAI:

As an amateur . . . ever since I was a child . . . and last year—my home is in Bukovina—I was connected with a little art theater out there. And I did so well that everybody—all the Bukovina critics and those who knew anything about the stage—told me that Vienna was the only place for me, and that you—

MONDENSHEIN:

(Beaming, but protesting.) H'm! My dear child, do you know that at least a thousand girls with exactly the same qualifications you have enumerated come to this city every year . . . and that of that thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine try immediately to get to me and see me?

HULDA JOKAI:

Surely you don't intend to put me by without even giving me a try-out?

(MONDENSHEIN shakes his head dubiously.)

HULDA JOKAI:

(Continuing fervently.) O Mr. Mondenschein, I know I have it in me to become a great actress. I have felt it here (pressing hands emotionally over her heart) ever since my childhood.

MONDENSHEIN:

That, too, is what every one of them says. (Looking her over carefully, as if he had seen her now for the first time.) But you are hardly yet a woman!

HULDA JOKAI:

I am over eighteen. I just passed my eighteenth birthday.

MONDENSHEIN:

(Appraising her out of the corner of his eyes.) Well, after all, one can't really begin too young—with the Dramatic Art.

HULDA JOKAI:

(Brightening, leans forward.) So you will give me a chance!

MONDENSHEIN:

Yes. (A pause simulating thoughtfulness.) I will . . . you appealed to me, in fact, the first time I saw you.

HULDA JOKAI:

(Surprised.) The first time you saw me?

MONDENSHEIN:

(With nonchalant certitude.) Haven't you been to Mr. Dangelsburg, my secretary, several times already, trying to arrange an interview with me?

HULDA JOKAI:

(Puzzled.) Yes, but how—

MONDENSHEIN:

You see, I can't afford to take chances, nor can I afford to miss anyone that might have dramatic ability of the more than ordinary kind—so, all the time—(halting). Let me see, it was three times you came to my secretary, wasn't it?

HULDA JOKAI:

Four, Mr. Mondenschein!

MONDENSHEIN:

Ah, yes—four! . . . Anyhow, all the time you were talking with him I was making a close study of you through a—a—well, a sort of periscope arrangement connected with the keyhole. . . .

HULDA JOKAI:

(Romantically stirred.) Oh!

MONDENSHEIN:

(Guiltily misunderstanding her exclamation as a rebuke.) I have to do that, you know, in order to sift out the worthy applicants from the mediocre, the wheat from the chaff. Whenever a girl sits in my office and talks with my secretary, I observe her minutely through this, ah, periscope, and from as detached a point of vantage as any spectator in the pit of a theater. Thus I get the applicant's dramatic possibilities without the necessity of granting a personal interview. Then, if after several such inspections, she finally appeals to me as having the proper qualifications, I make an engagement to see her myself. . . . (A pause.) Now, as for you—your personality appealed to me strongly from the very first . . . and every subsequent visit confirmed that impression. In fact, your type always has appealed to me. And now, if you are only tall enough, and, er, if you prove to have the other qualifications I require in anyone I take up—

HULDA JOKAI:

(Standing up. With a tremor in her voice.) Do you think I will do? Am I tall enough . . . do say yes, Mr. Mondenschein!

MONDENSHEIN:

We'll see immediately . . . (Going quickly over to her,—with a pretence of professional impersonality, MONDENSHEIN spreads his hands over her shoulders and backs her up to the door.) There! Stand erect! Press the back of your head against the door! (Before she can follow directions he takes her head in his hands and himself

presses it back.) Ah, you just reach the mark I've set there—the ideal height! (Takes her hand with studied unconsciousness and leads her back to her chair.) There, little girl . . . you may sit down again. (As if it just occurred to him, in a magnanimously paternal tone.) By the way, you mustn't mind my being what some people might call "familiar." . . . I'm old enough to be your, you know—well, your uncle, though I don't look it—and you must trust in me, believe in me. That is the first thing I always require of my actresses—I can't do a thing with an artiste unless I can first establish a mutual basis of human feeling and companionship.

HULDA JOKAI:

And they told me I would find theatrical life in Vienna selfish and hard!

MONDENSHEIN:

The theater is human like any other business or—er—artistic calling . . . only more so. (A pause.) With me people must not be cold and distant . . . the personal relationship means everything to me.

HULDA JOKAI:

(Emotionally.) O Mr. Mondenschein,—words can never tell how glad I am that I came to you. (Timidly.) And do you really think that you can make a great actress out of me?

MONDENSHEIN:

(With proud conceit.) I can make a great actress out of anyone I care to take in hand. There was Elsa Freihoven, for instance. . . .

HULDA JOKAI:

(Impressed.) Austria's greatest emotional actress!

MONDENSHEIN:

(Mildly correcting.) The world's greatest emotional actress! . . . (Crisply.) Yes, the great Freihoven. Would you believe me when I say that at the time I first took her in hand, well, you

wouldn't work day—a night—her int at last her to fully voice You, n even no the firs denshei ous st eyes, I you, al

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wouldn't believe how hard I had to work with her! . . . Yes, day after day—and sometimes till far into the night—I kept at her, trying to hammer her into my ideal of an actress—till she at last became exactly what I wanted her to be! (*A dramatic pause, carefully calculated.* Resuming in a low voice of intensely simulated sincerity.) You, my child, show far more ability, even now, to begin with—than she had, the first year I put her on as a Mondenschein star! (*Breaking into a curious staccato.*) With my experienced eyes, I can see that and much more, in you, already!

HULDA JOKAI:

(Pleased, but deprecating.) Oh, Mr. Mondenschein!

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Seeing that he has the right cue.*) Yes, it is all there—in the way you walk, the way you talk—in the motions of your hands, the way you carry your head—

HULDA JOKAI:

(Quite overwhelmed. Her eyes large and shining with emotion. Pressing her hands against her cheek.) How wonderful it is! How it all seems like a dream. That I should be with you—under your instruction—under you—the Great Master of The Dramatic Art—at last!

MONDENSHEIN:

(Who has risen, and leans over her, stroking her hair.) My dear, dear child, you embarrass me with your romantic idealism, your sweet, appealing faith in me. (*He kisses her hair with theatric emotion.*) But the day will come, my child—if you are at all like others—when you will even forget that it was I that gave you your start. That is the way of the world, you know . . .

HULDA JOKAI:

(Vehemently.) Never! That shall never happen!

MONDENSHEIN:

How simple and sweet you are—now! How untouched, unspoiled by worldliness. (*Sighs.*) But you are only human. . . . Just wait, my dear, till you have become famous, with great bouquets of flowers, expensive roses of rare variety, priceless orchids that are worth fortunes and wilt in a night, presented to you over the footlights at every performance, by admirers . . . statesmen, artists, writers, millionaires! Ah, little girl. (*He strokes her hand affectionately, then kisses it several times.*) At such a pinnacle of dizzy glory it will be very, very easy indeed to lose sight of your first friends,—yes, even of the friend who is going to bring out all this latent greatness in you. (*A long silence.* MONDENSHEIN still keeps hold of the girl's hand while she is lost in the vision that he has conjured up for her. After a while she leans toward him, lips parted with excitement, and speaks whisperingly, with timid, imaginative awe.)

HULDA JOKAI:

And you really do think that all that—that you have just said—could happen to me?

(He brushes his lips lightly against her cheek as she gazes again out into space, lost in revery.)

MONDENSHEIN:

My dear child! Under my tutelage anything can happen! But look, now, at what you've just said, "Could all that happen to me!" What did I predict? . . . already you've dismissed me from your thoughts, and, even now, only the glory and the triumph are in your mind.

HULDA JOKAI:

Please don't say that, Mr. Mondenschein!

MONDENSHEIN:

(Softly.) Don't call me Mr. Mondenschein . . . call me Heinrich!

HULDA JOKAI:

(Reverently.) I wouldn't dare! . . . I—I couldn't!

MONDENSHEIN:

Nonsense! (*Grandiloquently.*) Remember that from now on you are no longer a timid, little, unknown girl from Bukovina. Beginning with this very afternoon you are Hulda Jokai, the Mondenshein Star!

HULDA JOKAI:

(*With tears of joy.*) Even yet I can't believe it! It seems too good, too perfect to be true!

MONDENSHEIN:

You *must* believe me. You have it in you to be all I have said. And I have never yet been mistaken in my judgment. To have *me* take you in hand cannot spell anything else but sure success. . . . It has been seven years since I've done this for anyone . . . and the one I did it for was Lydia Larowska.

HULDA JOKAI:

(*Clasping her hands in awe.*) You made the great Larowska!

MONDENSHEIN:

Yes, it was I who gave her a career, just as I did with Freihoven . . . (*sadly*) but when she went off and got married I could do nothing more for her.

HULDA JOKAI:

—because she got married? Why—

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Vigorously.*) Yes, for no other reason but that. The Dramatic Art, Hulda, is the greatest art in the world, and its devotees must give up their whole lives to it if they desire to reach the first rank. As soon as an artiste marries, her allegiance becomes divided. Consider what the Saviour Himself said: No man can serve two masters—the house of art must not be divided against itself!

HULDA JOKAI:

(*Naïvely.*) I shall never marry. You won't ever have any trouble with *me* that way. From the first I vowed to give my whole life to my art.

MONDENSHEIN:

But devotion to your art will require much more, Hulda, than mere renunciation of marriage. . . .

HULDA JOKAI:

—I'm afraid I don't—(*hesitating*)—quite understand.

MONDENSHEIN:

Plainly and simply—then—if I'm to take you in hand and train you up to be a success, to give most of my time to you—we can't take time to bother much about the conventions, can we?

HULDA JOKAI:

No. I suppose we—we can't!

MONDENSHEIN:

(*After a long penetrating glance.*)—You understand me now?

HULDA JOKAI:

(*Naïvely and generously misunderstanding.*) Yes . . . I'm quite sure I do.

MONDENSHEIN:

That's good. And now I have still another question to ask you . . . have you, er, any male relatives of jealous disposition?

HULDA JOKAI:

I beg your pardon, Mr. Mondenshein?

MONDENSHEIN:

Have you any male relatives of jealous disposition?

HULDA JOKAI:

(*With girlish spirit.*) Suppose I had? I'm old enough to know what I'm doing. Besides, I never would let anyone—friends, family, or relatives—interfere with my career. That's one reason why I left Bukovina.

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Slightly suspicious.*) What do you mean?

HULDA JOKAI:

O, it wasn't anything serious. One of my uncles is an evangelist, and he

got my people persuaded that the stage was too immoral a place—

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Chuckling.*) What a dear child you are! (*With a smile meant to be reassuring.*) And yet it is true, the career of an artist is never to be measured and judged by the standards that apply to everyday life.

(*Stooping over her, he kisses her cheek.*)

HULDA JOKAI:

(*Innocently.*) When I said those very same words to my friends in Bukovina they laughed at me.

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Benignantly, with an outspreading motion of the hands.*) Of course. That was to be expected—in Bukovina!

(*A long pause, during which he quietly and informally seats himself on one of the broad arms of her chair, toying with her hair.*)

MONDENSHEIN:

So you are willing to give yourself over entirely into my hands, to be moulded and shaped into a great actress?

HULDA JOKAI:

I want to be great and famous, and respected for my genius. (*Lower.*) But I want to be a good woman, too, at the same time,—to show the world that it is possible for a—

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Interrupting, caressing her head with a semblance of absent-minded fondness.*) Yes, yes,—my child! . . . Speaking of that—do you know there are lots of girls with silly notions in their heads about me,—girls that talk of promises I never made,—girls that are piqued because I found they had no talent, and in revenge, tell tales about me?

HULDA JOKAI:

(*With the copy-book sententiousness of inexperience.*) I shouldn't mind

that! The great are always talked about!

MONDENSHEIN:

You are a sensible girl . . . but how little you know of life and human nature! (*He affects a dreamy, sentimental silence. Then, as if picking up the thread of disconnected thought again:*) But would you believe, now, that many girls go so far as to try and make trouble for me on the basis of promises they say I made? . . . go into hysterics, and all that? Some girls that I have never even seen, too! . . . (*Low and solemn.*) Hulda, do I look like that kind of a man?

HULDA JOKAI:

(*In spite of her deliberate lack of suspicion, somewhat disconcerted by the false ring in his voice, a note he cannot quite succeed in keeping out. She smiles up with uneasy earnestness into his face.*) Why—why, no! Of course not!

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Now melodramatically sure of himself, he lets himself go entirely. The organ music begins again with "The Funeral March of a Marionette."*) Listen then! You say you believe in me! Very well, I shall make a real test of your faith in me . . . I will make you party to a secret which I have so far been able to keep from everyone else. There is something in that closet there that—

(*With a semblance of tragic breaking down, the effect of which the weird music heightens, Mondenshein drops his face in his hands.*)

HULDA JOKAI:

(*Perturbed.*) I know you are only trying me,—but, in spite of that, you frighten me.

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Raising his face. With a shudder.*) Trying you! I wish it were only that! . . . (*After a pause. Gravely and solemnly.*) Hulda! . . . Hulda! . . . a girl—one of those foolish girls I

was telling you about, got in here this morning, somehow, and took poison . . . she is lying there, in that closet, now. . . . (*The door of the closet creaks open, of itself. It sends a nervous trembling through the form of the girl.* MONDENSHEIN continues, with very fine acting ability.) You must help me, you must tell me what to do! Before God, I can't bear the strain alone any longer. (*Rising and taking her hand.*) Come, if you doubt me, you shall see!

HULDA JOKAI:

(*Shrinking back, and laughing hysterically.*) Please, please don't . . . I know it's silly of me, but— (*As he draws her toward the closet, with sudden determination.*) Oh, very well,— I will!

(*As they progress slowly toward the open door, MONDENSHEIN seizes the opportunity to put his arm around her waist.*)

HULDA JOKAI:

(*With a sharp scream, at the door of the closet.*) O! O!

(*She breaks away and covers her face with her hands, standing still. Then, after a while, as MONDENSHEIN stands watching her curiously, she lifts her face to him, and laughs in a low, hysterical way.*)

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Again putting his arm about her, and smiling triumphantly.*) There! There! Calm yourself now, my dear! It was only a test, after all!

HULDA JOKAI:

(*Trembling, in spite of herself, as he leads her back to the chair.*) Yes, I—I felt certain it was only a test,—it seemed so absurd . . . and yet you lent such an air of reality, of plausibility to it, by the tone of your voice, your earnestness, that— (*She plumps suddenly in the chair, beginning to cry softly. Her hands tear convulsively at her handkerchief.* MONDENSHEIN watches her in silence, while hard sur-

faces of calculation play over his eyes, After a few minutes she pulls herself together.)

HULDA JOKAI:

I'm a—a fool, Mr. Mondenshein. Perhaps you had better send me away! . . . The way I screamed! It's a wonder your whole office force wasn't up here to see what was the matter!

MONDENSHEIN:

(*Complacently.*) As for that—you needn't worry. They never pay attention to what happens in here . . . they know it's only acting. . . . (*With professional satisfaction.*) And now that I've worked you up to just the right emotional pitch, I'll begin schooling you this very minute in the Great Dramatic Art! (*Rubbing his hands together.*) You see, I always have method and meaning in everything I do! Stand up again! (*Going close to her, as she stands.*) Come closer! (*Opens his arms to her.*) No, no—don't be alarmed. (*As she hesitates.*) Remember, this is only acting . . . come closer still! (*He puts both his arms about her.*) Now, repeat after me, just as I say it, word for word—I love you! I love you!

HULDA JOKAI:

(*After a moment's hesitation.*) I love you! I love you!

MONDENSHEIN:

No, that won't do . . . it's wooden . . . put more earnestness and feeling into it . . . and come closer . . . act more like a woman in love . . . say it like this . . . I l-o-v-e you!

HULDA JOKAI:

I l-o-v-e you!

MONDENSHEIN:

Quite an improvement. . . . But we'll take this up again later on. . . . Now again, after me,—I hate you! I hate you!

HULDA JOKAI:

(*With vigor.*) I hate you! I hate you!

MONDENSHEIN:

Fine! Now, again,—Let me go, you beast!

HULDA JOKAI:

Let me go, you beast!

MONDENSHEIN:

You're making good progress. Now again, after me—Help! Help!

HULDA JOKAI:

Help! Help!

MONDENSHEIN:

(Clutching her about the waist. She instinctively starts pushing back from him.) That's right. Struggle with me! . . . now try again, and don't be afraid to let your voice out . . . no one will notice!

HULDA JOKAI:

(With great energy.) Help! Help!

MONDENSHEIN:

Again! Put real agony in it this time—like this: Help! Help! Help! HELP! HELP!

HULDA JOKAI:

Help! Help! Help! . . . HELP!
HELP!

MONDENSHEIN:

Wonderful! (He motions the girl to reseat herself. He sits at the table again, and wipes his forehead with a silk handkerchief.) That was wonderful! In all my career I've never had so promising a pupil! (A pause.) We'll rest a few minutes, and then I'll put you through some simple exercises to test your grace and suppleness.

HULDA JOKAI:

(Faintly.) It's queer, but I seem quite tired already.

MONDENSHEIN:

O, I forgot . . . the simulated emotions I've put you through are the most tiring exercises possible . . . till you get used to them! So I'll teach you how to bend and stretch the next time.

S.S.—May—4

If your enthusiasm only holds out I think we shall get on very pleasantly.

HULDA JOKAI:

(Clasping hands in ecstasy.) O, I'm sure we will!

MONDENSHEIN:

(Suddenly.) Are you religious?

HULDA JOKAI:

No, not so very; that is—(breaking off)—but why do you ask?

MONDENSHEIN:

The question came into my head, rather inconsequentially. I asked it because you look exactly like an Italian picture of the Madonna in Girlhood . . . one that I have. Just a moment and I will prove it to you! (Goes to the cabinet at the back and brings small framed picture, which he shows her.) Here it is. Isn't it like you?

HULDA JOKAI:

(With a whimsical laugh.) Yes, just a little!

MONDENSHEIN:

(Paternally.) My dear child, you must drop this lukewarm attitude toward religion. Let me tell you, my dear little girl, there is nothing more pleasing, more perfect, than a beautiful woman who believes in God. You must have faith.

HULDA JOKAI:

But how can I, when I don't believe!

MONDENSHEIN:

(With pious enthusiasm.) You must! . . . in something, no matter what it is, so long as it is belief!—and why not accept the old things that men and women have treasured in their hearts and souls for ages and not found wanting in comfort and help?

HULDA JOKAI:

But why should I, Mr. Mondenschein? I try to be as good as I can—isn't that enough?

MONDENSHEIN:

Do you wish your life to become hard and dry? My dear child, it cannot help becoming so, without devotion on your part to some religious ideal! (Shaking his head sadly.) Ah, I have seen it exemplified in life too many times, not to know by now!

HULDA JOKAI:

(With lofty conviction.) Very well, then . . . I believe in Man and my religion is the religion of humanity.

MONDENSHEIN:

Nonsense! That is too vague . . . too general . . . it gets nowhere . . . the soul, the human heart, must have some more tangible object on which to fasten and fix its devotion. (Enraptured and carried away by his own eloquence.) Call me old-fashioned, behind-the-times, if you will—I repeat, it is reverence for purity, for virtue, which made the womanhood of the past so lovely, so charming, to men! And the Home, Hulda! . . . and the Family . . . and Motherhood . . . you must believe in these, too (adding quickly) even though, as an artist, you may never be able to know their blessings. . . . Thus, and thus only, will you be able to teach people, through your art, how to be good and true and happy and moral.

(There comes a long pause. Both sit in reverie. Then, with that quick abrupt habit of his, MONDENSHEIN rises and goes over to his writing table. HULDA, taking this as a cue for dismissal, rises, preparing to go.)

HULDA JOKAI:

Mr. Mondenschein, this has been the most wonderful experience of my life. When shall I come for my next lesson?

MONDENSHEIN:

(Rising so rapidly the chair pulls over.) No, no. Don't go yet . . . I was just writing down an idea for my new play. I didn't mean to dismiss

you—I've arranged a surprise for you, you see! In the next room I have a little table set for two . . . and we're going to dine together there . . . (a pause) . . . to celebrate your initiation into the great dramatic art!

HULDA JOKAI:

(Enraptured.) Then all my dreams are to come true!

MONDENSHEIN:

Yes, if you only have faith in me!

HULDA JOKAI:

I feel quite happy . . . I feel quite rested again!

MONDENSHEIN:

Well, since that's the case, I'll give you a few more lessons in emotional expression, while we wait for the dinner my man will serve us. . . . (Indicating the door at the right.) So just step inside there and make yourself comfortable while I telephone down for it.

(HULDA goes into the room through the door at the right. MONDENSHEIN, after waiting a space, lifts the telephone, and speaks into it with a stridulous voice, pitched almost uncontrollably high by emotion.)

MONDENSHEIN:

Hello! Hello! You, Armand, this is Mr. Heinrich speaking . . . you may bring up dinner for two—no, there is no hurry . . . say in half an hour or so!

(MONDENSHEIN hangs up the receiver, and, with a curious sidling gait, quite different from his former direct manner of progression, he follows Hulda's exit. There ensues a long silence.)

HULDA JOKAI:

(From within.) Let me go, you beast! I hate you! I hate you! Help! Help! Help! HELP! H-E-L-P!

(There comes a great dissonant roar from the organ that dies into a moan.)

CURTAIN

The Home Fires

By Art Smith

AS the dull gray edge of the city took on the first hues of the morning sun, Al Curdle yawned, cracked his whip, and rattled down the silent street to the last stop on the milk route. But for habit, however, Al should neither have yawned nor cracked his whip. He cared not whether the milk was delivered or not. For Al was a handsome man, and handsome men are usually in trouble. Sitting between his milk decks, he looked at his horses and did not see them. His gaze turned to the passing brownstone scenery. He saw nothing. A wheel of his wagon ran over the tail of a sleepy, homing cat. He did not hear a sound. Furtively he filled his briar. Mechanically he puffed. Lugubriously he spat.

Yes, Al was in a deal of trouble. He had come, so to speak, to the end of his matrimonial rope. Ida was a good woman. She was a fine woman, but—well, he was tired of her. She was like this eternal milk route—always the same—day in and day out the same! Why couldn't she bob her hair, or flirt with the butcher, or fight with the neighbors, or burn the pork chops—something! anything! Socks always darned! Soup never cold! Hell! A fellow had a right to expect something different once in a while—something—well, something wrong!

He brooded with contempt on her absolute cleanliness, her faithful morning and evening kiss, her shining kitchen range, her perpetual comely smile. There were times when he prayed fervently to be met at his door by a whizzing salad bowl, or a hurtling flat-iron. But no. No such adventure ever came his way. Everything was always just right.

His well-trained team stopped, and he reluctantly hopped off the wagon to deliver his last quart of milk. A little spiteful, perhaps, with his ruminations, he jangled the empty bottles together, secretly hoping he would wake up everybody who slept while he worked. And into the bargain he threw a swift kick at a stray dog slinking by.

Yes, he was tired of Ida. . . . And then there was Rosy, the maid at that swell Hopkins house. Now she was a vixen for you. If you pulled her nose, she made a pass at you with a broom. And could she cuss! And Sarah, the cashier at the dairy, and that red-headed girl whose car he had scraped one morning. There were so many of them with the pep and the fight—variety—that's what he wanted. And now he thought of it, wasn't Ida that way before he married her? What had he done? What had happened to bleach all the spirit out of her?

Al couldn't figure it out. But he knew one thing: He wouldn't stand for it any longer. There'd be an end to dull living. He made up his mind^d to that—and drove on. . . .

The sun was well above the housetops, as Al Curdle drew near home. After putting the horses in the barn, he had decided to walk home and see if he could find a way out of his trouble. A short block from his house he was still firm in his decision to sever, somehow, the tie that bound him to his

uneventful matrimony. But when he saw the little cottage that his years of work had paid for; when the familiar windows and flower-pots and gables came into view, something melted within him, and he knew he could not follow out his determination. After all, it was pretty fine to come home—to find a smiling wife who had a thousand little ways and words of comfort. And besides, what was he doing to make their lives more spicy? He called himself a great fool, as he went in the front door, and felt a lump in his throat, as he fancied his cold, cheerless boarding house of the days before he had found Ida.

But what was that strange smell in the house? And where was Ida? Cooking, perhaps, but . . . Ah, he understood, she had burned the pork chops! Well, that was better! When he reached the kitchen he heard a sputtering and saw on the range a little blue flame slowly consuming his morning meal. Rushing to the rescue, he turned off the gas and stood looking down at the cindered chops, a little smile of satisfaction playing about his lips. He noticed also a piece of greasy paper sticking to the handle of the frying-pan. Didn't she have any rags to pick up hot pans? He took the paper. There was writing on it. Idly, he began to read it. Wide-eyed he read it again:

"So long, Al. I'm sorry, but I can't stand you any longer. You're always the same. You're forever grinning. You have never given me a black eye. Gus, the ice-man, is taking me away from it all. I'm sure it is for the best. Good Luck. And Bye Bye, you big stiff." IDA."



Pauline Jests with Her Lover

By Maxwell Bodenheim

*"YOUR whiskers tremble in the breeze,"
She said, "like notes within a dark
Nocturne by Chopin, but your mouth
Intrudes with some inane remark.*

*Your eyes are like the gleams within
A song by Grieg, and charmingly
They rule your wistful face until
Your voice rebukes their melody.*

*Your nose is like a prisoned fugue
By Cyril Scott, and it remains
Until your words on life and art
Release a mob of growing pains.*

*If you could only wrap your face
In silence, dear, your lips would burn
With clearer sounds against my face.
Alas, I can but sit and yearn!"*



The Amorous Goldsmith

By John McClure

AS it was sunset and a breeze was blowing, Diodorus moved in the direction of the park. The odor of water that was blown from the Nile was invigorating and the clouds seen above the tops of trees were more appropriate than when viewed above the tiled roofs of Cairo. Natural wonders are more magnificent in conjunction, said Diodorus, and bricklayers and carpenters are an affront to eternal substance.

As there were no solitary benches in the park, Diodorus Carnifex seated himself beside a man in a cloak of white and violet, zebra-striped, who had on his finger the insignia of the goldsmiths. The face beneath the turban was one of extreme melancholy, the forehead overlaid with gloom, the eyes, those of a man who wrote verses. He turned toward Diodorus, nodded gravely, and looked back over the grass toward the level waters of the Nile into which the sun was sinking in a blaze of red accentuated by the green between.

II

"They may say what they please of the administration," said Diodorus Carnifex. "This park is delightful, well-apportioned, airy and easy to look at."

"It is an oasis in a very squalid city," said the goldsmith, turning. "I come here often. The whispering of the grass in the wind is like a harmony of small harps."

"Eh?" said Diodorus.

"The proximity of nature," said the goldsmith, "is balm to any man troubled with sorrow. I come here to sit because of a trouble."

"That is unfortunate," said Diodorus.

"I am beset by a sorrow," said the goldsmith, "that has seemed to me more times than one greater than man can bear. Being a human creature, you know it is possible to be so burdened with woe that death itself seems charming and the sort of life that is customary in this world is horrible beyond expression."

"There is no balsam like a young wench," said Diodorus, "for doldrums such as you speak of. Fall in love, if only with a barmaid. Then you will find everything pleasant."

"Mention no wenches to me!" cried the goldsmith. "I cannot abide the conception. You speak frivolously, like a Cyrenian. Have you never known—if I may ask so private a question—disaster in love?"

"My affairs of the heart were never spectacular," said Diodorus, "though I have suffered as much as any poet or barber. Either I was snubbed quietly or else they submitted with decorum. I never climbed to a balcony. I know, to be sure, what the moon looks like in April when one's sweetheart is in another part of the city, and the pangs of unrequited and thwarted affection are quite familiar to me. But great and dramatic passions are uncommon, I am convinced, and I at any rate have escaped them, though I have kissed both maidens and matrons."

"You are fortunate or unfortunate, according to the manner in which it is viewed," said the goldsmith, sighing. "I could tell you a story out of my own heart would make the dead sob in their graves for the pity of living."

"It would needs be a very significant

narrative," said Diodorus, "to accomplish such a paradoxical end. Any corpse, I am certain, would consider the galleys delectable. But proceed."

"I hesitate to confide such an affair of the heart to another," said the goldsmith.

"You would consider you had done a creditable action if you should set it in verses or write it in prose and publish it for ten thousand persons in a journal," said Diodorus.

III

Then the goldsmith said:

"It was about the time that spring came bragging down from the mountains. The trees were beginning to green. I met her walking like a goddess of some sort with long strides before the temple of Isis. She was on her way to a draper's. My sensation at beholding her was such as one has on a long voyage when one sees a white bird flying over the sea.

"Could I describe her beauty? It could be done only with pigments. Her eyes were neither blue nor gray, but pearly silver. Her face was as serene as Samian marble. Her mantle was hyacinth blue, her sandals golden.

"I followed her to her home, always at a respectful distance. She noted my movements, and my gaze of admiration she returned with a blushing smile. Then she vanished into her father's magnificent house. Next day I sent a brown boy with a message supplicating her to meet me at the temple of Isis in an alcove while the people were praying.

"Her father, I learned in the meantime, was extremely wealthy, as he had made a fortune supplying the army with bacon. His home was largely of marble. Also there was chrysoprase in it. It was fortunate that my calling was that of a goldsmith, else I should have been overawed by such pompous display.

"I planned a gift for her. I selected sapphires spotted with gold and purple sapphires out of India, and strung them upon a chain of silver, but this I rejected. I fashioned an amulet then of jasper, emerald-green, threaded with

stripes of white. But that also was unsatisfactory, and I prepared, working late into the night, a plaque of golden-hair, the color of topaz shot with bright rays, and set in the center of it a diamond and hung the whole on a golden wire.

"Next morning at the hour when the devout gather in the temple of Isis to pray for success in sin, I hastened to the temple, my gift enshrouded in silver-leaf, and between the pillars of the north approach awaited the arrival of this girl. She came shyly. And what I said to her and what she replied I will not confide in you, for these things are not repeated or written, and, if passed about second-hand, are banal enough. But I was awestruck by a weakness in my knees and a giddiness that I was at a loss to explain.

"You must understand that the beauty of her face was such as is encountered only in platonic years. She allowed me to embrace her hastily and she admitted that she was enamored of me and agreed that I might meet her again. And I departed strangely light on my feet as if I were riding upon a broomstick."

"I have had the same feeling myself," said Diodorus, "in connection with an affair I had with a red-haired woman in Antioch."

"She admitted her love for me," said the goldsmith.

"She was impressed by the jewelry as likely as not," said Diodorus Carnifex. "My levitation at Antioch proved, I remember, unjustifiable. But continue."

"I entered from that moment," said the goldsmith, "upon a new life. For the first time since my birth I was extremely aware of mystery, wonder and terror. When I walked past a beer-garden, the music played through my brain like needles. The flamboyant mystery of existence confronted me and I was seized with an eldritch fear. I was afraid that this girl might die or that I might be deprived of her. And when I arrived home, though business

was pressing, I commenced a treatise concerning love."

"When I was a pup," said Diodorus, "I projected a treatise of that sort. Before I was finished I had written ten volumes of abracadabra."

"I did not conclude it," said the goldsmith. "Next night we held our rendezvous in the dead quietude of the temple of Isis. I met her in the gusty corridor. And we pledged our troth, eternal you understand, in those deserted precincts, I giving her on this occasion the necklace of sapphires. Therefore we met more often in one place or another. It was an affair as beautiful as any Greek novel, but of necessity secret, because she distrusted her father and mother who were very devout and had a fear of the demon. So we met stealthily.

"The protracted absences served only to intensify my yearning. I began to write verses when I should have been mounting gems or hammering goblets."

"I have made rhymes myself," said Diodorus. "Nothing is easier."

"But a jeweler who wrote ballads and presided at salons on the art of versification," said the goldsmith, "told me my verses were bad. So I set myself to learning the sounds of instruments."

"You entered upon a difficult field," said Diodorus.

"So I discovered," said the goldsmith, "and in the course of time I ceased all these efforts, content to stew in my agonizing bliss without the solace of art. I met Porphyria when it was possible. When she appeared in public I watched over her from a distance. And you can imagine my turmoil when one day on the street she passed a handsome man in a cutaway coat, but nothing came of it.

"You will understand that I was in the throes of love," said the goldsmith, "not that comfortable affection which a grocer feels for his wife, but that supreme anguish and delight which is reflected in the finest sonnets."

"Every grocer at one time or another

has seen the stars falling," said Diodorus, "and has pursued a dryad into a gooseberry bush. There is no need to malign any son of Adam in expressing yourself. I know very well what you mean."

"I was in love desperately, then," said the goldsmith. "And this beautiful existence endured for a number of months. Yet now," cried the goldsmith, "I sit here with my dreams blasted or walk the streets by moonlight, bereft and half insane. My soul, stricken by bleak despair, is chasing the lean winds from end to end of the world, seeking for solace. Nothing was ever so restless as it is. My body, I will admit, sits or walks about as conventionally as anyone's. But my soul, scribbled in eternal substance upon the parchment of time and space, is the hieroglyphical symbol of hell and despair."

"And how has this come about?" said Diodorus. "Did the young woman die?"

"Worse than death has come to her," said the goldsmith, falling into a silence.

Then the goldsmith continued:

"An elderly man wrote to her that he knew very well what happened under the portico when the moon was shining. He knew nothing, of course, and who the devil he was I have never discovered. But the letter fell into the hands of her father. She was locked in the house at once and was married forthwith to a bishop to save the family's honor. She is residing now in a handsome establishment with four footmen and a butler on the street of the Presbyters. I cannot see her again."

"This is unfortunate," said Diodorus, "and destiny has indeed been high-handed with you, but you will recover. Your fate is neither so exceptional nor so horrible as you imagine. All men have suffered similarly, and some, in other endeavors, have fared worse. King Menes was eaten by a hippopotamus."

"His end was preferable," said the goldsmith grimly.

Love

By Ruth Plumly Thompson

*L*OVE is the lace
That the tall ships trail,
Luring the giddy
Landsman after,
Spreading over
The oily waves
Lighthearted nets
Of foam and laughter!



A Note on Men's Hats

By John Torcross

WHAT an absurd thing a hat really is! It will put to ridicule the most sombre of us: half a size too large or too small is all that is necessary. Our dignity explodes into thin air.

In truth, the more solemn we are, the sillier we appear. In a comic chapeau, our features assume a look of asininity; our face becomes a thing of fun. We are a target for guffaws, an object of buffoonery. Let the brim be a fraction of an inch too wide or too narrow, and a salvo of chuckles greets us on all sides.

It is like no other portion of the apparel. Surely one's shoes may be gunboats, and evoke no criticism; one's suit may be baggy or too tight; but bedeck us with a hat that doesn't fit, and you might just as well label us with a placard reading: "Kick me hard."



WHAT in youth is called passion is, in old age, vice.



Resolves and Fancies

By Morris Gilbert

EPPA came walking down the street, holding himself very erect. He was wiggling his fingers, and making faces. Tight again.

When he saw me he beamed.

"Well met," he said. "Let us go somewhere and talk about St. Francis."

We went to a neighboring place, there to discuss the affairs of the man of Assisi, but when we sat down Eppa observed a young person across the room. In her arms she had a little beast that might have been a caterpillar. She was feeding it a lettuce sandwich, than which nothing could have been more appropriate, to be sure. We joined the young person.

"There's ether in the beer," she said, "but what distresses me is that Gigot has ptomaines."

This was after I had been presented.

"Eno's Fruit Salts," asserted Eppa judiciously, "are an excellent—"

"He won't drink medicine," said Althea, "but I thought if we all went up to Lubin's we might take along some syrup of figs and put it on a lettuce sandwich when he wasn't looking. He loves lettuce sandwiches but it's very hard to deceive him."

"You could tell him it was bar-leduc," said Eppa. He twisted his face into a knot and his fingers looked like a lesson in basketry. Evidently he was meditating or perhaps brooding.

"Oh, excellent young man," said Althea, "you were always resourceful. I regret our divorce."

"It was timely," said Eppa, and we started for Lubin's.

II

EPPA'S speech recorded above might be considered brusque, but it was uttered in a kindly, gentle way and produced nothing but a sweet assent from Althea. She wrapped the napkin blanket-wise around Gigot, who yelped petulantly, and we got into a taxi-cab.

"Doubtless," said Eppa to me as we turned toward Madison Avenue, "doubtless you would be interested in the history of our divorce."

"Yes," said I, "I would."

Eppa turned to Althea.

"The man Jones is worthy of hearing about it," he said.

"He has discerning eyes," said Althea. "Go ahead."

"Very well, Althea, I'll speak first," said Eppa. And he turned to me.

"The cause of our divorce," he said, "was primarily theological."

Eppa and Althea sank back in their seats on either side of me with lucid expressions on their faces. I raised an assiduous brow.

"You see," Eppa continued cogently, "we split on the question of the Assumption."

"Of the Assumption?" I inquired.

"Yes," put in Althea, "that was it. I remember very clearly."

"The Assumption of the B. V. M.," said Eppa with a puddly look at our companion. He turned to me, again. "That was before I went on the stage, you know," he informed me.

"I didn't know when you went on the stage," I began, but I was interrupted.

"It wasn't," Eppa expounded, "because the Assumption is celebrated as a

Double of the first class within the Octave—which is entirely proper if one accepts the festival at all—but because Althea did not consider St. John of Damascus's account of the event valid."

Althea broke in, her voice slightly raised.

"It's typical of you, Eppa, to present a wantonly false thesis to the man Jones—I did not denounce the validity of St. John of Damascus's account. What I did say was that his account was based on a spurious report of the Council of Chalcedon, which would discount it automatically."

Eppa's face was turning like a labyrinth. He suddenly shouted to the chauffeur.

"Stop for some syrup of figs," he cried. Then he lowered his voice again.

"It just occurred to me," he said, "that we were forgetting the object of our trip. Pardon me, Althea, for interrupting your train of ideas."

The chauffeur was a little bewildered at the command Eppa had shouted at him. I leaned out of the cab and directed the man to halt at a drug store along the route to Lubin's so that we could buy some medicine. Eppa's exegesis continued:

"There are many admittedly spurious accounts of the corporeal assumption," he proceeded without permitting Althea to speak. "Among them are sermons falsely attributed to SS. Augustine and Jerome. Another is contained in a forged letter of St. Denis the Areopagite. St. Melito of Sardis is wrongly held responsible for a book on the subject, while an apocryphal treatise—"

The taxi drew up before a drug store. Eppa opened the door and stepped down.

"—while an apocryphal treatise bearing the signature of St. John, of which a copy is said to exist in the Trieste Museum, entitled "De Obitu—"

His voice trailed off as he entered the druggist's.

Althea and I sat in the cab. The beast in her lap barked for some moments hysterically and without intermission.

"Hush, dearest," said Althea. . . . "A lovely fellow," she said, and I gathered she was referring to Eppa, "but unsynthesized. He fails to organize. However—" she rested her candid and perturbing eyes on me—"I shall always be devoted to him—always."

I thought I detected a slight tremor about her exquisitely moulded lips, but when I looked again I perceived that I was in error. They were entirely firm. She gazed pitifully on the little caterpillar-animal whose head protruded disconsolately from its wrappings.

"T'es souffrant, tu meurs, ma gosse, mon toutou, mon Gigot, hein?" she demanded. The beast snapped at her.

"Darling!" said Althea.

Eppa's voice broke upon our ears. He stood fumbling at the cab door with a parcel in his other hand.

"At the time," he was saying—apparently he hadn't stopped talking at all since he left us—"at the time, I was seriously considering taking holy orders. Or if not orders, at least entering a novitiate. You will note," he appealed to me, "that such a step was manifestly impossible in my married state. Althea was of the same opinion."

I nodded in comprehension.

"Yes," said Althea, "we agreed, reasonably, that celibacy and the married state were incompatible. I was inclined to hold with Eppa in his conviction—"

"But the only thing we found ourselves in conflict about—as I have already told the man Jones," broke in Eppa, "was the Assumption.

They were both very lucid and expository.

"That was all," said Althea, "and we concluded that under the existing conditions, the thing for us to do was to obtain a divorce. . . ."

There was a pause while the taxi waited for a go-ahead signal.

"The French are very liberal," observed Eppa. "In France, we were informed, the only grounds demanded for a bill of divorce was something upon which the prospective divorcees disagreed—"

"*Incompatibilité*," Althea interjected placidly.

"The answer was obvious," cried Eppa—"it was the Assumption!"

"The Assumption," Althea's assent was grave. The dialogue took on a contrapuntal effect.

"I just pointed that out, Althea," Eppa said sternly.

"I know," said Althea, "but—"

"So we went to France," he interrupted, "and rented a little cottage—"

"Place of residence," Althea explained in a legal tone.

"The man Jones doesn't need to be told that, Althea—"

"It was the sweetest, tiniest house!" she cried.

"—In a little *patelin* not far from Paris—"

"The darlingest *patelin*!" she fluted ecstatically—

"And lived there," Eppa shouted—

"—until the divorce was granted!" burst in Althea.

"Until the divorce was granted," Eppa repeated with finality. . . .

They were silent for a moment. Then—

"Do you remember what fun we had there, Althea?" Eppa inquired.

"Yes, didn't we!" she agreed with gusto. Their eyes seemed to be filled with memories. . . . There was a little wrinkle in Althea's forehead.

"You see," she continued, "the decision was obvious and quite simple, because at the time I was contemplating joining the Society in the Field for Ameliorating the Spiritual and Moral Condition of the Heathen in Geelvinck Bay. I was going out there for two years, and I obviously couldn't take my husband."

"Where is Geelvinck Bay?" I inquired.

"It's in Borneo," said Althea.

"Well, did you go?" I asked.

"As a matter of fact," said Althea, "I didn't."

"That was just as well," said Eppa. "The organization had no proper ecclesiastical authority. It was merely a sectarian or heretical one."

"Did you, in fact, enter the Church?" I asked Eppa.

"No, I didn't," said Eppa. "There were obstacles . . . obstacles"

He was brooding, because his face looked like a mass of salt water taffy being pulled.

"Come to think of it," said Eppa, "I didn't. I really didn't. . . . There was the episode of Père Michel and his turtle" he said it darkly. "I presently found myself playing in a musical comedy. . . ." He sighed.

"Here's Lubin's," said Eppa. He passed his flask round and then we bundled out. The little dog squealed as he was lifted down.

"*Pauv' toutou!*" sighed Althea. She turned to Eppa.

"What was it I was to tell Gigot the syrup of figs was, Eppa?" she inquired.

"Bar-le-duc," said Eppa.

III

LUBIN'S presented its accustomed midnight scene—demure, mincing children of the chorus, terrifically bad-mannered roisterous debutantes, sleek-haired young alcoholics—shouting and jangling—just like Saturday night on the Island, only the red-hots cost a dollar.

Quartets in the little cubicles around the walls were blowsily pawing one another and nibbling at things. The ensemble in the half-light was animated but undistinguished.

Gigot's squeals were added to the uproar and got us quick attention.

"Nothing for me," sighed Althea. "How could I eat with my poor darling dying?"

Eppa followed the waiter out to the counter where the delicatessen and imported chocolates are for sale, and Althea and I could see him gravely smear a spoonful of syrup of figs on the lettuce sandwich. . . . He returned.

Althea hugged the animal spasmodically.

"It's bar-le-duc, sweetheart," she whispered in the dog's ear. Her eyes were big and persuasive. "You may

think it's syrup of figs or some other nasty medicine," she wheedled, "but it isn't, honestly, darling. Honestly, precious, it isn't! It's really bar-le-duc!"

"*Kitchy-kitchy-kitchy—it's really bar-le-duc!*" she cried, snuggling the beast in her arms. The beast whined. Then he laid back his floppy ears and snarled in the soprano. We watched him judiciously.

"He's not convinced, Althea," said Eppa.

She crooned over Gigot again, stroking him, like a siren soliciting a crawfish.

"You love bar-le-duc," she coaxed. "*Mon toutou*, you know you love bar-le-duc! Eat it, like mother's own adorable child!"

The beast's singsong subsided.

"There," sighed Althea triumphantly.

"Trying to croak the poor purp?" inquired the waiter affably. "I wouldn't blame yeh." Althea's eyes flamed. The waiter moved away uneasily. . . .

Gigot stood on the table where we three seriously watched, and he wolfed the sandwich. It was gone in an instant. The beast's appetite seemed to be insatiable. He tried to eat the sticky waxed paper under it. He gnawed the glass table top. After the paper was taken away from him, he lay down suddenly with a flop on the table, and shut his eyes.

A shade passed over Althea's face.

"Eppa," she said suddenly, "how much of that stuff did you put on the sandwich?"

"Four teaspoonfuls inside and three on top," said Eppa. "Why?"

Althea's face seemed to turn a little gray.

"Let's go outside," she said, drearily, as I thought.

A shade passed over Eppa's countenance.

"Let us go and sit in the Park," he said. "I'll carry Gigot. . . ."

IV

It was one of those mellow early summer nights, fresh and serene, balmy. We had slipped into the Plaza entrance

to the Park without being observed by the police, and wandered on a northward path near Fifth Avenue.

There was a moon standing over the proud rooster on the building below the Vanderbilts' old house, and it was as dazzling as the chain of orgulous gold lights that stretched their looping miles up and down the Avenue, where the tires of an occasional motor were audible sizzling by.

Presently we came upon a bench and sat down with a certain expectancy to wait what might happen. Eppa moored Gigot by his strap to one of the bench's legs. The beast seemed sleepy. There was a bronze dazzle that seemed almost a part of the foliage about us. It might have been the moon that did it, but it might have been the rays of the big twin globes that sprouted on their stalk just across the wall.

Gigot seemed to be sleeping lumpily at the end of his tether.

Eppa brought his flask from his pocket. His face roiled in the moonlight. We drank with ceremony.

"It's bright, isn't it," said Eppa. "Almost as bright as day."

"Yes," said Althea. "God must be sitting up late with a good novel."

We were still for a moment.

"Tell me, Eppa," said I, presently, "the incident of Père Michel and his turtle to which you referred a short time ago."

Eppa brooded.

"I would rather not," he said presently. "It involved an unfortunate exegesis on immortality. . . .

"There was a toothbrush in it, too," he added.

"The toothbrush, Eppa?" Althea inquired significantly.

"Yes," he answered darkly.

"Fancy!" said Althea. . . .

A motor passed on the Avenue and a little breeze stirred the leaves overhead. Eppa sighed.

"Ah, well," he said, "that's all past and gone now." . . .

Another pause ensued. The night was mandragora. Then—

"What did you do with the Charles

Street apartment when you came back?" Althea asked.

"I kept it," Eppa responded softly. I'm living there now. Somehow it seems a pleasant place." . . . We thought about that a while. . . .

A shriek pierced the air. It was Gigot. The beast convulsively leaped from the ground. Before he came down, all four legs began to paddle frenziedly. On earth once more he started running. Hitched as he was to the bench leg, he slewed round as the strap came taut, but this merely changed the direction of his course. He ran in a circle whose radius was the strap. The radius narrowed as the strap was wound round and round the bench leg. Presently he brought up fast, but his activity only redoubled, and he scrambled still harder against his bonds.

The three of us were so taken aback for the moment that we merely stood and watched the animal. Then Althea crouched and tried to untangle him.

"Oh, my life," she sobbed, "my darling, what is it? Tell Althea, what is it?"

She couldn't free him and Eppa ran to help. Between them they struggled with Gigot. At last I lifted the bench leg, and the strap was untangled from it.

Then followed one of those periods, lasting probably not more than ten minutes, when life looms large, primitive, intense. At such times the minds of men are caught in a maelstrom. Nothing exists beyond the tight-drawn bounds of a narrow horizon. Catastrophes, cataclysms, may occur elsewhere in the world, the figures in the current drama are unaware of them. The moon and stars riot in a centrifugal flume overhead, the earth shakes. Blades of grass in the distorted immediate vision loom as fantastic-big as scythes. Pebbles are mountains. . . .

Peace descended presently, as grateful as summer rain.

The little caterpillar-beast was supine but apparently content. We three sank exhausted on the bench, and I could feel an immaterial immemorial bond stealing about us—the bond that em-

braces those who have stood side by side in the turmoil of a great event. I glanced at Eppa and Althea. I saw that they were holding hands.

"Since I have been on the stage," said Eppa, presently, "a broader vision seems to have come into my life. I see things more clearly. A too close scrutiny of theology is narrowing, I believe."

"Yes, one is apt to arrive at conclusions by abstraction," said Althea.

I struck in.

"Was to enter the church your only reason for getting your divorce, Eppa?" I inquired.

"Yes," he said, "except that Althea wanted to go to Borneo."

"But you neither of you did what you set out to do, did you?" said I.

There was a moment's pause.

"By George, that's true," said Eppa, presently. "Do you appreciate that, Althea? We neither of us did what we set out to."

"He's right," said Althea, quietly.

"The man Jones is without doubt right," said Eppa. "What an odd thing." . . . They both pondered for some moments. They were sitting very close together. . . .

We didn't stay very much longer. In a short time we rose in silence and strolled back toward the Park's entrance. Eppa had picked up Gigot.

"Let's take a taxi," said Eppa.

"I live just round the corner," I said, "but I'll wait till a taxi comes along for you people."

One came soon. Althea and Eppa got in and said good-night to me. But before they went away, Eppa drew forth his flask and we drank again. They seemed particularly gay, I thought.

I am not sure, but I think Eppa gave the chauffeur an address in Charles Street.

Althea leaned out of the window as they drove off.

"Come and see us soon," she cried, and then they rolled out onto the Avenue. Through the back window of the taxi-cab I could see that Althea's head was resting on Eppa's shoulder.

The Dutiful Husband

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

TREMAINE scowled, for he was thinking of Millicent. His wife had left him, three months before, because he did not always let her do exactly as she liked.

"If Millicent and I ever meet," he said to himself, "I'll let her do as she wants to—I'll help her! I swear it!"

Suddenly he noticed a woman standing on the edge of the subway platform. There was something familiar about her. She was dressed in a long, enveloping sealskin cloak. Its high collar covered the lower part of her face; she wore a small, black hat that almost covered her eyebrows; she looked like ten thousand others.

He could not recognize her, however. She began walking up and down. Occasionally she slipped one hand through a slit in the cloak and pecked at her eyes with a handkerchief.

An express train came roaring into the station. The woman hesitated. Then, with firm, decided steps, she started across the platform.

Tremaine gasped with horror. The woman threw herself from the platform, down to the tracks. Suicide was her object. She lay sprawled where the grinding wheels of the train would mangle her.

Swiftly Tremaine leaped forward. The motorman put on the brakes; a stout man on the platform screamed in a high-pitched voice; a thin woman with long earrings turned white beneath her rouge.

The train moaned as the brakes held. Upon the tracks, half lying on

the inside rail, was the woman in the sealskin cloak. Tremaine plunged down beside her, grasped her around the waist, and threw her ferociously back on the platform. In a fraction of a second, he had leaped up, and the train whined to a stop.

A crowd gathered, morbidly curious. The stout man was shivering; the thin woman was saying, "Oh, my! Oh, my!" over and over again. Tremaine unceremoniously pushed his way through the ring of people. He saw the face of the woman in the sealskin cloak.

It was Millicent, his wife.

Scowling, Tremaine lifted her up, leaned her against a post. "What's the matter with you?" he growled, his agitation making him angry. "Why'd you try to kill yourself?"

Millicent recognized his voice, the old antagonism rose within her. "You always cross me!" she cried. "You always interfere with what I want to do! I'm sick of life! I want to die!"

Another train could be heard in the distance; soon it would rage into the station.

"I want to commit suicide!" cried Millicent. "I'm going to—"

Tremaine caught her. "Room! Room for the lady!" he ordered. "She's fainted!"

The crowd fell back, just as the first car of the onrushing express appeared at the end of the platform.

"Millicent, I swore to-night that I would let you do what you wanted to," said Tremaine. "Good-by!"

He threw her in front of the train.

Love's Old Sweet Song

By Worth Tuttle

I

IN '59 Aunt Reb had ridden into Iowa astride. In '23 she rode up to our house in September. And although her method this time was the customary Ford one—the jitney from the station—the shock she caused us must have been as great as the one she caused the frontier community in '59. That Aunt Reb liked to surprise her relatives was a fact too well known in the family, but that she liked to surprise them more than she liked to stick to a habit she had once formed was the greatest surprise of all. Aunt Reb in September! She had never visited us before except in April.

When I heard the snorting of the jitney I looked out of my window just in time to see Aunt Reb push her bulk out of the tonneau and pull her numerous bags and boxes after her. I called Mother and ran downstairs. I was truly glad to see her. I wanted to talk and Aunt Reb was the only person I knew who had any idea as to the functions of a listener. She could understand why, though I was only nineteen, I wanted to marry Robert and chuck the diploma. No other one of my relatives seemed capable of seeing the good sense in that very natural desire. When I talked to Aunt Reb she seemed no more than eighteen, though she was seventy-nine. When I talked to her, I always saw her in that bright red silk dress that had had so much to do with her first marriage.

That story and the one about her entrance into Iowa, often told in my

hearing by my great-aunt Hannah, had never failed to arouse my enthusiasm. I had learned it by heart. I remember I used to play at being Aunt-Reb-Coming-Into Iowa. In Virginia Aunt Reb had been called Rebecca, and maybe the name suited her there where the mountains or family traditions or something as awe-inspiring held her in check. But when she went a-pioneering, she gave rein to herself when she gave it to her horse. She had flatly refused to sit in the ten square inches provided for her in the covered wagon. The last glimpse of the Blue Ridge, instead of sobering Aunt Reb and causing her to dab a tear-soaked handkerchief to a homesick eye, as it did my Aunt Hannah and the rest, brought her an increase of spirits.

By the time they reached the open prairie, Aunt Hannah, who had watched her all the way across from the depths of the feather bed in which she sat, said "Rebecca was possessed of the very old dodger himself." She wanted to sleep outside the wagon, she flirted with the cattle drivers, she—but all that was sixty-three years ago. The things she did later shocked her relatives even more. She objected to the home site in the only rocky region Iowa possessed. She didn't want anything to remind her of Virginia—and right now neither did I. . . . She made up for the family's refusal to allow her to live alone on the prairies by riding across them—astride!—all that part of the day she could save from the chores, whooping like a wild Indian, or lying flat in the long grass, singing at the

top of her voice—and from what I heard of her singing in church, I could well believe all the uncomplimentary things Aunt Hannah said about it.

When Aunt Reb was eighteen, her mother and her sister Hannah thought that they had "broken" her. Suddenly she had submitted to wearing a blue silk dress, to pinning her hair down flat, and to attending church, where she sat watching the preaching as devoutly as was necessary. The family had just begun to breathe easily about her and to watch the preacher instead of Rebecca, when on an early Sunday she had disgraced the family. She had walked into the choir uninvited and joined the singing in the voice she had used so lustily on the prairie!

When the next "schooner" from the East brought luxuries to Iowa, Aunt Reb had appeared in a red silk dress with an explanation of her unwanted entry into the choir. Young Will Lefler, the local sport and dare-devil, had bet her that dress she would not go into the loft unasked! Of course, my great-grandmother locked her up in her room until she promised to return it.

She did return it, but she married Will Lefler and got it back. The family objected, of course; it is a habit they have to this day even when the young man is as sober and industrious and well-behaved and handsome and—oh, well, even when he is what Robert is. They said that Uncle Will was wild and a drinker and that he had been heard to curse! They said that he and Aunt Reb would be parted within a year. They were—but it was by the Civil, not a domestic, war.

When Uncle Will came back a hero, Aunt Reb subsided for a time into a housewife. She and the dare-devil were antidotes for each other. Alone they would probably have kept on shocking the neighborhood, but together they were a well insulated pair. (I think I've mixed my physics with

my chemistry, but anyway, they lived in peace.) Of course everybody said they fought behind closed doors and watched them with hawk eyes to prove it. They never did. To the public—in which term Aunt Reb wisely included the family—she spoke sweetly of "your Uncle Will" or of "my husband" for more than forty years. When he died about six years ago, Aunt Reb seemed "resigned." That was the way everybody expressed it.

II

SHE began shocking people again immediately. She refused to put on mourning, and when within a year she married the circuit-rider, the Reverend Burley Luther, aged seventy-three, they whispered that she had "as good as announced it on the day of poor Will's funeral."

"Your Uncle Burley" came as easily to Aunt Reb's tongue as "your Uncle Will," but he, too, died before anyone of us had become used to the change. This time Aunt Reb seemed less resigned. "He was such a good man," she would sigh, "but do you know, Jessie," I heard her say to Mother, as if she were ashamed, "there was just one thing your Uncle Burley couldn't do. He couldn't make much of a prayer. No, the Lord had denied him that talent. He could preach—my, how he could preach!—but he couldn't pray."

Aunt Reb was seventy-four then, still as "hale and hearty as eighteen," she would say. I think she knew that everyone expected her to do nothing but wait to die. They might have known better. She would never wait for death. It would have to run to catch her.

So for five years she had continued doing what she had begun to do, systematically, when Uncle Burley died. Each April she made her round of visits to her relatives and to the graves of her husbands. She had buried them side-by-side in the little

town in which we lived and where she had lived as a girl. Only the exact day of arrival at the first place surprised us. After that everyone knew when to put sheets on the guest-room bed. If she came to Aunt Sarah's on Monday, my Mother prepared for her on the following Monday, and Aunt Anna on Thursday, and so on. For five years now her itinerary had not varied. For once she seemed to be enjoying doing what people expected her to do.

Mother resented her visits. She couldn't show her off to the Literary Circle, and though the *Sakaloosa Argus* always gave a full paragraph to "one of our earliest pioneers, the guest of Mrs. Thomas Heniger, Jr." Mother always breathed with relief when she was gone. It was just a case of a misfit in temperaments. I don't think anyone but Aunt Reb and I suspected the struggle Mother made to be agreeable. As I have said, I liked Aunt Reb. To the casual observer, I suppose, she was a very ordinary old woman. She was broad with no waist line to speak of, and she wore her thin gray hair in a flat pancake at the back of her neck. That was all you saw—if you did not like her. If you did, and she knew it before you did yourself, her eyes were full of understanding of your most unsuspected thoughts and her face full of sympathy and humor, and of what I think you would call strength of character.

Then when Aunt Reb became sanctified, Mother objected even more. That conversion of her was a surprise, even to me, though I put some of it down to her wanting to shock the family again after her five years of perfect behavior. She had never been notorious for her religion until after Uncle Will's death, and then it was just the everyday Methodist kind that we all had. But in Des Moines in July there had been a big meeting of sanctified folk. My grandfather, Heniger, who had lived with us since his wife's death the year be-

fore, belonged to the sanctified church and he had gone to the revival. He had brought back the news of Aunt Reb's "second blessing," as they called a conversion. "How in the world did Aunt Reb know anything about a revival on the other side of town?" my Mother had asked. "I called round to see Sister Luther when I first got to Des Moines, just to give her the family news, an' when I mentioned the grand meeting, she said she'd like to go. And, Daughter, she got the blessing the very first night! Oh, it was a blessed service, a blessed service!"

That was the last we had heard from Aunt Reb—she never wrote letters—until this September morning when I was packing to go back to college in Virginia, just as angry at having to go back to that state as she had been glad to leave it.

III

MOTHER was at the door before I got Aunt Reb and her paraphernalia up the steps. Mother's facial expression was like that of a farmer seeing snow in July. She pecked Aunt Reb on the cheek.

"Why, Aunt Reb, why didn't you tell us! We would have met you!"

"Met me!" Aunt Reb gasped at Mother. "Did you ever meet me? Have I ever warned you?"

"No, but, you see, you haven't been to Sarah's yet, and—"

"Do I have to go to Sarah's first?" Aunt Reb inquired mildly.

"No—but, well," Mother smiled lamely, "you see, you always have!"

Seemingly that was what Aunt Reb was trying to make Mother say. She looked at Mother steadfastly:

"I ain't so set in my ways yet, Jessie, that I always have to keep on doing what I've always done!"

And Aunt Reb went into the house, and we after her.

"But if you're really anxious to know why I've come," Aunt Reb looked at me so that I got the twinkle

in her eyes, "I've come to the meeting out at the sanctified church!"

Mother gasped, "Why, I didn't know you knew anything about that—that little church way at the end of nowhere."

"I still read the papers, Jessie, and the Des Moines papers ain't too stuck up to print little church notices like your *Argus* is."

Mother eased Aunt Reb into a comfortable chair as though she were a very old lady, and sent me to get the guest room ready.

"You needn't be a-fussin' over me, Jessie. I ain't ready for crutches yet awhile," she said as I went out. "Anyway, I jes' think I'll walk around in the side-yard and have a look at your chrysanthiums! Your Uncles Will and Burley need some brightness on their graves."

I knew that Grandpa Heniger was out sunning himself in the garden. He had been nervous and fidgety all day, barely touched his lunch and Mother had been pleased when he chose to get out of the house for a little while. So when I went back to my packing—I had to leave on Monday—I was not surprised to hear Aunt Reb and Grandpa, through the open window, talking away about their new religion.

"I tell you, Brother, it's the Lord's way to salvation!" Aunt Reb expounded. "He said as plain as my hand here that there are them who must—"

"Aunt Reb, your room is ready. I suppose you'd like to tidy up—"

I looked out and saw that Mother had joined them.

Aunt Reb broke off her discourse, "Tidy up? Ain't I all right?" She spoke to Grandpa Heniger.

I snickered at the gallant bow he made. I had not known he could do it. "As right as—" he began.

But Mother always *was* for doing, or pretending to do, what should be done. She believed in observing all the formalities.

"After your trip on that dirty train,

Aunt Reb—" she protested. I think she began to feel a bit *de trop*, as our French teacher used to say.

"Well, Jessie, perhaps I might wash up jes' a little. If Brother Heniger here will excuse—"

Grandpa Heniger stood up and bowed from the waist, as well as a man can whose back is already approaching a perpetual semi-bow. Usually his face was discontented in expression, but now it was—beatific! His fierce old eyes, beneath their heavy brows, were, I was sure, like a lamb's. Such, I thought, is the power of religion! Why, Grandpa's face then looked like Robert's had, when I had met him unexpectedly at the post-office the day before. He had been worrying about something, and then when he saw me—but this is Aunt Reb's story.

Aunt Reb slipped into my room just as the supper bell rang.

"And how's Robert?" she asked, patting me.

I answered all the questions I knew she had put into that one.

"Well, well!" She picked up an armful of stockings to darn for me. "It will all come out in the end. Your Mother is just like her Mother, Wana—like my sister Jessie. Now neither Hannah nor Jessie liked it when I married your Uncle Will! No, they did not!" Aunt Reb chuckled. "But they all came around in time—after I *had* married him. They all came around—every Sunday night for supper!" She tittered at her joke.

I looked at her, but if she had been suggesting that I follow her example, there was not a hint of it in her placid face. She left me to put away the darning and came back talking of decorations for cemetery plots.

"Women, Wana," she said later, apropos of nothing, "are either good fellows, like you and me, or cats! There's nothing like a man for company, though! Now your Uncles Will and Burley were both—"

We had reached the foot of the stairs and Grandpa Heniger was com-

ing in the front door. Aunt Reb began talking to him about the evening's service.

At supper Grandpa Heniger ate heartily of steak and potatoes, though he hardly ever touched meat. Aunt Reb gossiped in her own lively way. Not even Mother's obvious disapproval could curb her stories of the family's comings and goings all summer. Her little house was easily reached from the Des Moines station, and her ears, during the summer season of vacations, became depositories of all the clan's news. I could see that Mother thought she was talking a little too freely in the presence of "the other side of the house," but I liked to watch her eyes, especially when she was telling the story of my third cousin's, Ida's, elopement with that "nice young man her father wouldn't allow inside the gate."

"It just won't do to try to do the marrying for your children! They'll know better every time! Now, just suppose, Jessie, that I had listened to your mother and Hannah and Ma and not married your Uncle Will! Why, I mighta died an old maid!"

Grandpa Heniger made a queer noise in his throat.

"Wana, get your grandfather more water! He's choking!"

I rushed to the buffet, but the look he gave Mother made me pause. I compromised by filling all the glasses, Grandpa Heniger's last.

"And for that matter," Aunt Reb continued, folding her napkin precisely, "I don't know that the family was so set on your marrying Tom here—"

Father glared at her in astonishment. Mother fluttered.

"Oh, I ain't saying that there was anything against him! It was just because the family hadn't assembled and picked him out from all the other young men in the neighborhood."

Aunt Reb excused herself and hurried toward the door. She didn't want to be late "for service."

She had not reached it before Grandpa Heniger pushed back his chair and fumbled on the floor for his cane.

"Jes' a minute, Sister Luther, I'm a-going to service!"

"What! Out in this night air with your rheumatism!" Father fairly roared at him.

"And I've made charlotte russe for you!" Mother gasped.

"Save it for me, Wana!" He spoke over his shoulder as he thumped from the room.

Mother and Father looked at each other. Father muttered something about elderly fools being the worst kind.

"But aren't they the old dears!" I exclaimed.

"Dears?"

The sound of the telephone bell interrupted Mother's indignation. I ran to answer it. I knew it was Robert. He wanted to come around after he had finished up at his father's office. To my utter amazement, Mother said she supposed they could spare me from bridge by then. The Smithsons and the Raffertys were coming in and, as usual, I had to make up the second table.

After the clock struck ten, I kept an ear attuned for Robert's step on the porch, but before I heard it, we all heard the eager voices of two persons, youthful voices in spite of the hesitations and repetitions that mark old people's conversations. My partner had the bid, so when Mother stepped on my toe, I went out to keep them from spoiling the party by bringing in news of the meeting. I was mighty glad of an excuse.

I took Aunt Reb's arm and led her toward the dining-room. Grandpa Heniger trotted after us like a pet sheep.

"Oh, Wana, your Grandpa is powerful in prayer! You shoulda been there to hear him! It was a blessed service, a blessed service. And here I was exhorting him today!"

Grandpa Heniger chuckled like a

school boy who has said his Friday piece well.

"Hey, Wana, but your Aunt Reb certainly can speak in meeting!"

In the dining-room I put charlotte russe and hot milk before them and then sat down at the head of the table. They kept on talking about the meeting, and sipping milk and flattery. When I heard Robert's step on the porch, I had to bring him in to meet Aunt Reb.

It was a case of love at first sight. Aunt Reb fell for Robert's tallness and blondness and blue eyes, and Robert knew, without being told, that Aunt Reb was no ordinary old woman. I had known that he would "see her right," but it gave me a thrill, just the same, to realize how harmonious all our tastes were. Grandpa Heniger, who had never treated Robert as a man, but as just "Wana's beau," somebody who wakened him at night closing the front door and bothered him in the day by telephoning when he was alone in the house—now began to talk to him as though he were an individual with ideas about the best way to fill a pipe. When I came in from the pantry with a russe for Robert, Aunt Reb had him in a deep conversation out of which I got only an occasional "Wana."

IV

ON Saturday morning I stuffed the last box of cocoa and the last text book into my last trunk, and went in to talk to Aunt Reb. I had given up all hope of persuading Mother and Father that a marriage certificate would mean more to my happiness than a diploma. They simply would not see reason. If I had been as ignorant as they were of simple reasoning processes, I would have flunked in Logic too badly to get a diploma. I called their attention to the 93 opposite Philosophy 11 on my latest report card, but they said that was only a sign that I had too good a mind to

let go to waste! Waste, when it was a matter of making Robert happy! So I went to Aunt Reb's room to talk to her. It was more worthwhile.

"Oh, Aunt Reb," I frivoled, "there you are mooning about meeting!" I put my arms around her neck. She had forgotten all about my suit skirt she was shortening, and was staring at the wall with the expression I learned in the movies was always associated with persons in my stage of in-loveness. Religion, I began to think again, must be—

Aunt Reb turned her face up to mine inquiringly, "Meeting who?"

I laughed, "Meeting. Sanctified Meeting!"

"Oh," said Aunt Reb. "No, I was jes' a-thinking what a beautiful prayer your Grandpa can make. You and Robert oughta come to meeting and hear him! An' tonight's the last night." Her voice was like that of a debutante at the end of a successful season.

Mother called to me from the stairs and I went down. When I came back, Aunt Reb was at the window looking down into the flower-garden—what, to Mother's dislike, she insisted upon calling "the side-yard."

"Mother wants to know whether you're going to Aunt Sarah's before or after dinner," I said. "I don't see why you have to go at all till I leave."

"Sarah's! Why, I ain't said a word about going to Sarah's today! Whatever put such an idea into her head?"

"I don't know. I wondered. You hadn't told me anything about it!"

Aunt Reb looked at me coyly. "I don't have to tell *you* everything! . . . No, you go tell your Mother that I think I'll jes' stay on here awhile—unless she needs her spare room! You know, Wana, your Mother is jes' like my sister Hannah and jes' like her own mother. She can't understand change. No, jes' because I never stayed more than three days here, she thinks I never will!"

I went back downstairs to give the message, edited, to Mother, and be-

came involved in her baking. When I finally got back to Aunt Reb's room, it was empty I went to the window.

The picture I saw through it was like those advertisements of savings banks, above the words, "In the Sunset of Life," or something like that. You've seen them. On a bench beneath the autumn-tinted maple sat Aunt Reb and Grandpa. Their hands were clasped in the traditional way and they were smiling into space.

After the first shock at the sight, I smiled, too. . . . Then I fell across Aunt Reb's bed and cried. It didn't seem at all ridiculous to me that an old lady of seventy-nine should marry an old man of eighty-one. It just shows, I suppose, how in love I was, how haunted I was, after Mother's and Father's illogical attitude, at the thought of a lonely old age. Now Aunt Reb and Grandpa would be together, if they wanted to be, for the few years they had left, while Robert and I would be separated for all our lives. Oh, I was pessimistic! Robert's having to go to California, while I went to Virginia! It seemed impossible that any railroad would ever bring us together again.

I managed to get my eyes natural and to be in the dining-room with Mother and Father before we heard Grandpa Heniger's cane on the porch. I had expected that he and Aunt Reb would make some sort of an announcement, and I was all a-tip-toe to hear it, but even I was not prepared for the sight of them in the doorway still holding hands and smiling, like two young things going to papa.

Mother and Father stared with their mouths open. Actually. They closed them when they realized how idiotic they looked, but they were too overcome to speak. Finally Father got out something he should have been ashamed of:

"Hey, Father, what's this? A new twist in sanctification?"

Grandpa tittered. He was enjoying himself. "Sanctification ain't got nothing to do with it. Sister Luther and I going to git married."

Both Mother and Father turned to me, as though I were responsible, as though being-in-love were the measles or something else contagious. I shook my head firmly. They deserved all the credit.

"Nonsense, Father," my father spluttered, red in the face, "marrying at your age! It's impossible—I won't have it!"

"Never spoke truer in my life. Ain't it so, Sister—Reb?"

Aunt Reb nodded. Plainly, she was hurt at the reception this "surprise" was getting.

"Well, we'll talk it over after dinner." Father had suddenly calmed down and spoke as carelessly as though he were postponing a game of checkers. I didn't blame Grandpa for being mad.

He came over to Father's chair and shook his finger in his face: "Now, look 'ee here, Young Fellow, I ain't your son. I'm your Pa!"

Father looked at Grandpa, and I think he felt like a little boy again. I knew that he had had to walk pretty straight until Grandpa made over the hardware business to him, keeping only his life interest in the firm.

Aunt Reb touched Grandpa on the arm. "There, there, Thomas. Let's don't work up any hard feelings. We'll talk it over peaceably after supper."

Grandpa subsided, and squeezed Aunt Reb's hand—with its two wedding rings! We all sat at our places and looked at the chops and potatoes and brown gravy. Mother did not say a word, though. Aunt Reb made several sallies at general conversation: the weather, the neighbors' chickens, the state of the flowers in the side-yard, "and, by the way, Jessie," she concluded, "if you don't mind, I think I'll jes' take along a bunch o' chrysanthemums to the grave-yard tomorrow. They're sort

o' dried up, but your Uncles Will and Burley need—"

"Oh, you're going to the cemetery!" Mother said.

After we had sat at the table for what Mother thought a proper time, we filed into the living-room. I wanted to get upstairs to powder my nose before Robert came for our last evening together, but when I saw Aunt Reb and Grandpa go in and sit together on the davenport and hold hands right before us all, I decided to stay. Anyway, Robert wouldn't know whether my nose were dull or shiny tonight.

Father leaned against the library table in what he thought was the attitude for a peaceful talk. I had seen it before and knew it wasn't. Mother took a rocker and tried not to look toward the davenport. I hung around in the background.

Father delivered an address, businesslike and brief: Grandpa and Aunt Reb should not be carried away by—er—their religious fervor and fellow-feeling. (He had said "youthful emotion" in my case.) They were too old for that sort of thing, being seventy-nine and eighty-one respectively. (Robert and I, being twenty-five and nearly nineteen, had been too young!) Practically it would not do. Aunt Reb was dependent on her relations, and Grandpa had only an income sufficient unto himself—well, at least, hardly enough to keep two comfortably. (Robert, he had said, was going to a new place to open a new business; he couldn't hope to succeed for several years.)

"You forget, Tom! I have my little house." Aunt Reb's voice was smooth.

"Yes—yes—but it was a gift from your nephews and nieces. I could not let my father live on their bounty!"

Grandpa's whisper, directed at Aunt Reb, filled the room. "Jes' the way I talked when he came to me 'bout Jessie there."

For a while everybody was silent,

Then Aunt Reb and Grandpa got up. We looked at them mystified.

"Well, maybe you're right, Tom," Grandpa said, "you're a good smart business man. We old folks do git queer notions now and then, but I guess—maybe—you're right. We'll think it over again."

Aunt Reb said nothing. She assumed all the air of a jilted woman. She looked at the floor. She wiped her eyes, and when she passed me on her way out, she said so that everyone could hear, "May as well be jilted by a man as by his common-sense, Wana."

V

Just as Robert rang the door bell, Aunt Reb and Grandpa reappeared in the hall ready for church. I read Mother's look, and though it was absurd, I thought that chaperoning the pair would give Robert and me opportunity for a long walk and a long talk. Robert read my look, and we started to meeting with one accord. Seemingly, in the second romance in her house, Mother had forgotten the first. But then, my trunks were already at the station, labeled Sweet Briar, Virginia.

When I came down to breakfast on Sunday morning, Mother and Father were still at the table. Aunt Reb and Grandpa, as is the habit of old people, had eaten at their regular time on Sunday. Father was speaking in a pleased voice, the businessman voice after a successful deal:

"All they needed was a little commonsense shown them. They had forgotten that they had to keep on having food and shelter as well as—companionship. But the old man's no fool, if he is sanctified. He had got a little testy before Aunt Reb came and she sympathized. That's all there was to it." Father rubbed his hands, "I had another little chat with Father this morning—told him it would hurt the business to have him getting in the papers, marrying at

eighty-one! Folks might think the family was a little off. I guess the old man's pretty smart yet!"

Mother sighed. I kept my eyes down. So this was the way they had talked over Rob and me!

"I tried talking to Aunt Reb," she said, "but she wouldn't give me any satisfaction. Just said it did get mighty lonesome in her house all alone. I can't make her out—nobody ever has."

"Well, she can't marry Father without his consent. That's sure—and I'll bank on the old man's having his way in the matter!"

There the conversation stopped, luckily for me. I could not have kept quiet much longer. Mother said she was going out to pick the chrysanthemums for Aunt Reb to take to the cemetery.

Aunt Reb came to ask me to hook her up. She was all dolled up in her black silk dress she had for Uncle Burley's funeral. I told her how sweet she looked, and she beamed at me and said that I would look just as well the next day when I started off for—Virginia. Then she hurried away with Grandpa for a special "season of prayer" before the regular service.

I was putting the last hairpin in when Mother called me to the telephone. I hope I appeared surprised. I had been quaking for fear she and Father would drag me off to church before that call came. Mother stood about ten feet from the telephone, putting on her gloves.

"If it's Robert," she said, "please do not talk all day. He'll be late for church. Besides you'll be with him all afternoon, I suppose."

"No, Mother," I said, as I took up the receiver, "I won't. Robert has to go to Des Moines to see about his ticket to Los Angeles."

I think I would make an excellent actress, for all that I heard from the other end of the wire was Grandpa's titter and an occasional—"hm—hm—all ready—hm—hm—come right on—

hm—hm—." And I replied, with correct inflections, "Yes, Grandpa. Organist? Oh, how bad! Yes, I can play hymns. Yes, sir. In fifteen minutes. Don't hold up the service."

Mother had begun protesting before I had hung up, but I pretended I had not heard. I had promised Grandpa I would come. There was no way I could let them know. Their whole service would be ruined if Aunt Reb led the singing. That got a smile out of Mother, and she gave in, but only on the condition that I would cut short their hymns and come to the First M. E. in time to tell everyone good-by and to walk home with her and Father.

I was breathless when I got to the little old chapel on the edge of town. I saw Robert waiting at the door, and pushed through the crowd of nondescripts that belonged to the church to get to him. He squeezed my hand, "Look at them, Wana! Do you suppose we'll sit like that when we're—a hundred!"

"Well," I answered, "if it isn't your hand I'm holding then, it won't be anybody's else."

And we went down the uneven aisle to the front bench where sat Grandpa and Aunt Reb, openly holding hands. On the altar rail, glowing like a pool of gold, were the chrysanthemums Mother had picked for the graves of the husbands Will and Burley. In Grandpa's old Sunday coat lapel there was a big yellow bud. A preacher in a swallow-tail was conversing with a sharp-nosed woman at the tiny cabinet organ.

Robert and I sat down on the front bench with them. Grandpa pulled out a folded paper and gave it to Robert, and took a ring from his vest, and after admiring it a minute, passed that over, too. Aunt Reb looked at him proudly, "You'd 'a' thought he got married every day," she whispered to me. "Now, your Uncle Burley forgot the ring entirely. Look, Wana, is my collar straight?"

I told her she was lovely.

The smirking preacher came to the front of the platform and lifting his hands, spoke to the now crowded chapel.

"Brethren and Sisters, we are all saved and sanctified. We all know about what it is to have the double blessing—"

"Amen, Brother. Amen," came from the seats just behind us.

"...it is my privilege," he smiled. "It is my privilege to tell you that one of our flock, a man great amongst ye in prayer and exhortation, has got a *third* blessing."

I could feel the stir behind me, as though they, too, were preparing to receive this novelty.

. . . it isn't one that we *all* can get. No. It is a blessing rare and precious. . . ."

But I can't remember all of that preacher's sermon. I don't think I heard much more than that. Robert had got hold of my hand and was squeezing it between us on the bench. I came to when I heard:

"Sister Luther and Brother Heniger will kindly step to the front—er—with their attendants."

Neither did I hear one word of

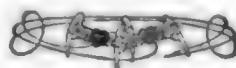
the ceremony. I was thinking of the next day when I would be hearing something like it said to me in the parlor of the Methodist parsonage in Des Moines.

The squeaky little organ, beneath the muscular pressure of the organist's hands and feet, sounded the first note of "Love's Old Sweet Song," and Aunt Reb walked down the aisle with her third happy husband.

Robert had the station Ford waiting at the curb and we put them into it.

"Here, Wana," Aunt Reb tittered, "take your Uncle Tom's flower. We don't want to 'rouse the town. And don't forget to put my darning bag in the suitcase. We'll expect you in the morning. Don't you let her get cold feet, Young Man," she turned to Robert. "Virginia ain't the place for her. She's like her Aunt Reb." She felt around in her purse and pulled out a bunch of keys. "Take that little key off that bunch, Robert, and come right in tonight when you get to Des Moines."

They disappeared, waving youthfully to us, in a cloud of gasoline and September dust.



Anticipation

By Helen Hoyt

A NOTHER night to wait—
One day, and then,
Beside me close—
You—you! returned again!

And I shall touch your face
And touch your hair,
And reach my hands
And know that you are there!



Fragments Flecked From Europe

By Creighton J. Hill

THE face of the British dock striker watching the *Punch and Judy* show in a Liverpool Square. . . . The restaurant at Mont Martre where they ask you whether you will have your chop broiled over willow twigs or poplar. . . . The man in the feeding station at Berlin whose twisted face looked like the answer to something—only the question had been forgotten. . . . The English deck steward on the trip over, the most interesting person on the vessel, with an incredible war experience and every medal his government could give him, spending his days tucking steamer robes around querulous women. . . . The German waiter in the café at Dusseldorf taking the order of a French officer most deferentially and then winking broadly at us as he turned away. . . . the Cheshire cheese in London where we found nothing but American tourists. . . . The expressions on the faces of the waiters as they tossed toy balloons in among the dancers in the gilded boob-trap at Mont Martre where Americans gather to see "Paris night life." . . . The packet of letters and pictures in a "War Department, Official Business" envelope, kept by a German girl in Coblenz as mementoes of the recent American Occupation. . . . Baudelaire and Verlaine in a low-studded, smoke-filled room back of the Sacré Cœur on Mont Martre with a life-size figure of the Crucifixion seen hazily suspended from the further wall. . . . The American who told us while steaming up the Rhine between Mainz and Coblenz that it was a mighty fine

river, but it couldn't touch the upper stretches of the Hudson. . . . The same gentleman who later slapped us on the knee and said, "Well, boys, after everything's said and done, we'll all agree there's only one country." . . . The thin bodies of under-nourished children lying in the outdoor hospital in Berlin which chanced to be the same field over which in 1914 the Kaiser's crack regiment goose-stepped in training. . . . The sound of church bells carried over the water of Lake Geneva on a Sunday morning. . . . The naïveté of the German ex-officer at Essen who, upon learning that my companion and he had both been stationed on the Western Front during the war, remarked: "Ah, it is possible that we have been enemies." . . . The same officer who showed us a complete collection of a certain genus of butterfly which he had caught with his iron helmet back of the lines during the four years of the war. . . . The pagan spirit of the Paris gamin standing before the entrance to a street show in the Place Pigale inveigling passers by to enter. . . . The Dionysian qualities of all Swiss girls. . . . Ditto of Swedish. . . . The inability of German waiters, shopkeepers, Cabinet officials and bootblacks to consider time as an essential or even minor factor in any given situation. . . . The hideous monstrosity of the Eiffel Tower astraddle the city of Paris. . . . Seeing an audience of stolid-faced German peasants burst into uproars at a motion picture in which Fatty Arbuckle and Buster Keaton threw custard pies at each other. . . .

Thoughts about the diabolical cleverness and sacrilegious ingenuity of the artists who shaped the gargoyles on Notre Dame in Paris . . . The quiet of the street corner in Mainz at midnight with its high-bracketed street lamp, which our hotel room looked down on. . . . The utter bad taste and incredible effrontery of the Hotel Adelphi in Liverpool where we were told "all Americans go there" as a reason for our putting up. . . .

The monotone of the blind newspaperwoman on Unter den Linden striking the eardrums like the steady drop, drop of water at night. . . . The first sensation of handing a million mark tip to a waiter in Cologne. . . . The first astonishment at hearing a three-year-old child speaking French without an effort. . . . The two pathetic and identical statues in Essen of Alfred Krupp with sideburns in cast iron. . . .



People Cannot Understand

By Francis Abercrombie

PEOPLE cannot understand why Strawman's engagement to Hortense was broken.

She was twenty-five and really beautiful. Her figure was slender, but not immature; her mind was quick without being superficial; her social and financial positions were above the average.

They were engaged, and he and Hortense occupied one chair, Strawman was speaking.

"Dearest," he said, "I love you. Doubtless you have heard this statement before. Yet you have never mentioned any of your—former acquaintances. I do not wish to force your confidences, but—" He glanced at the charming feminine figure that decorated his lap—"but, I believe, that other knees have grown numb from the same reason that mine are now—"

Her eyes became reflective, but she did not move. For a few seconds she was lost among her recollections.

Strawman spoke tenderly. "If you do not wish to tell me— Or if you'd rather not—I do not demand—"

Still she did not reply.

"Without affectation," Strawman continued, "and without displaying conceit, I think I may say that I am broadminded. You are human, and, consequently— So am I. But I do not ask—"

Suddenly Hortense began. While Strawman sat with strange, violent, startling emotions racing through his mind, Hortense uttered numerous words. She talked on and on and on. From her early childhood, on through school days, to college, and then to finishing school, Hortense reviewed her life. It was much like other lives.

But people cannot understand why Strawman's engagement to Hortense was broken.



The Secret of the Sargasso

By Fairfax Downey

LATE at night though it was, nobody aboard the steam yacht "Atlanta" had turned in. The group of passengers under the canopy aft was lending the closest attention to the words of the scholarly looking gentleman addressing them. On the bridge, a man and a woman absently watched the slow progress of the vessel through endless seaweed, while they listened tensely to the uncanny sounds from the radio room.

"And so now I am permitted to reveal to you," the Professor was telling his fellow passengers, "why Glen on this last cruise of his has brought you to the Sargasso Sea."

There was a stir. The ex-Flapper squeezed the College Man's arm. The Chaperon exchanged glances with the Impresario, who bent forward in an attitude of obvious interest.

"I said his *last* cruise," the Professor continued. "You all know of the financial reverses our host has suffered. They are of such an extent that the luxury of this trip must be his last. He wanted me to tell you that. But before worse comes to worst, there is just one chance for him."

"And that is?" prompted the Impresario, with eager curiosity.

"That the search on which we are sailing succeeds," the Professor finished. "Fantastic and speculative as it is, it yet lies within the realm of possibility. Its success means more than the regaining of a fortune for Glen Platt. It means happiness for the girl on the bridge there with him. It means the recovery of something

precious to the world, something which is believed to have been lost forever."

Upon that period the Professor paused. His audience began to chatter so loudly and excitedly that the two on the bridge half turned to look down, but their eyes sought each other again quickly, unaccustomed trouble in his blue ones half mirroring the sadness in the depth of hers of brown. A wisp of her soft black hair, blown from the confinement of a high comb, seemed to caress his cheek and the man gripped the rail hard, steeling himself to resist the spell of the moonlight and the dark slender beauty of the girl at his side.

"It isn't square of me to say something I want to, unless we succeed," he declared determinedly. "Because if we fail, I'm broke and this beginning all over again isn't the fast work it's cracked up to be. It isn't fair to a girl—"

"I have been poor before," his companion protested with a shy smile. "Being poor is harder for those who never have been."

But the man only compressed his lips more tightly and motioned for her to listen to the Professor's best declamatory tones, which the breeze carried up from the deck.

"When we sailed from the Bahamas," the Professor was narrating, stroking his beard, "you were given to understand this was a pleasure cruise, with the Azores as its destination. But you must by this time have suspected that no pleasure cruise would involve loafing at this rate

through the Sargasso Sea. We're making about the time Columbus did when he discovered this vast, seaweed-bound stretch of the Atlantic on his first voyage. Well, we're looking for about the same thing Christopher was—gold—but in golden notes. And we are exploring currents more uncharted than any he ever met.

"This old Sargasso Sea is full of legend," pursued the Professor, pleased with the way his words were gripping his audience. "It was long thought to be the port of all missing ships. Mariners believed that every lost ship that stayed afloat sooner or later drifted to this sea, where, caught in the grip of its eddies and seaweed, they sailed their spectral courses until their timbers rotted away."

"And is it true and not a legend after all?" the Bachelor asked. "Are we really on the trail of galleons crammed with ingots and double-loons?"

A steward was slowly replenishing the contents of the iced glasses before the guests. The Professor waited until the man had left before he answered:

"Best be careful what we say before this crew. Most of them were picked up in the emergency and we don't know how trustworthy they are. But to reply to you now. No, it's just a legend. A Norwegian voyage in 1910 proved that. But it is true that in these waters meet ocean currents from all points of the compass. And, what is of the utmost importance to our purpose, above this sea meet winds from all quarters, as well as currents of the air.

"Without holding back the secret from you any longer, what we are seeking in the air is the lost voice of the late Signor Giuseppe Berni!"

All eyes turned toward the slim figure outlined against the blue of the night at the side of Glen Platt on the bridge. The two leaned close together on a rail.

"So that's why Beatrice Berni is

along," put in the ex-Flapper.

"That's one reason," the Professor smiled. "And that is also a reason why Signor Rizzi, Berni's old impresario, is with us. If we recover the golden voice of the greatest tenor, we must have the two persons at hand best able to identify it in certainty, his daughter and his manager."

"But how can you find a dead man's voice in the air?" they all broke in at once.

"By radio," the Professor said simply. "Berni's voice was broadcast several times."

There was a silence. The Bachelor exclaimed, "My God!" then in embarrassment begged everybody's pardon. The ex-Flapper giggled.

"Why not?" the Professor demanded.

As if to answer the Professor's question, the powerful apparatus in the radio room made the night suddenly hideous with the moanings and weird screechings which an imperfectly tuned set emits. The shrill tumult was more ear-piercing than any of the passengers ever had heard. Then with one last wail, as of ten thousand lost souls, the pandemonium resolved itself into a snatch of intelligible speech.

. . . 's ball on the 30-yard line. . . . Signal given for a drop-kick and . . .

"By George, Professor! You're right!" the Bachelor shouted. "The football season was over two months ago. And I'll bet a hat that particular play was reported from the Yale-Harvard game. We're tapping the past! We're—"

His words were lost as everyone began talking at once. The Professor was slapping the Chaperon on the back. The black eyes of the Impresario were snapping. The man and the girl on the bridge were clutching each other's arms, frantic with joy. Lewis, the operator, ran gasping out of the radio room.

"I've lost it, sir," he cried to Glen Platt. "And I don't know just how

I got it. I was using a wave length that wouldn't catch a thing from shore —nor anything outside a radius of twenty miles. Where in the deuce did that back number stuff come from?"

Without waiting for an answer, he dashed back into the room.

The owner of the "Atlanta" began assuring the girl at his side that the prize was as good as won. Her delicate oval face was slight with hope. The sadness had fled from her deep brown eyes.

"I tell you, Bell," Platt cheered her. "We're going to rescue your father's voice from nothingness. Lewis in there is ready with a phonograph recorder. It's all set for anything and everything that comes in. Before we turn back, we're going to have records of the songs your father used to sing."

The girl smiled happily.

"I never have told you why my father never sang for phonograph records," she declared. "At least, not the whole reason. You know, with most people, that he had put it off. His ride to fame had been so fast. He had sung only one season in grand opera. There seemed plenty of time. Every day higher offers were made him. And then—he died."

For a moment the girl was still; then she resumed:

"But much of the delay was because—few know this—because he hated phonographs so. His prejudice began in the hard years when we lived on Rivington Street. My father struggled hard for our living while he waited for his opportunity. Always when he studied and practiced, a man next door played terrible sounds on a terrible phonograph. It almost drove us crazy.

"Then came the opportunity at the Metropolitan. My father became the greatest tenor. But when he died so soon, his voice went with him. Now it is nowhere."

"It's in the air, I tell you, Bee," the man insisted. "You know he sang

several times for the radio. He had no prejudice there. That's one of the reasons the world knows him so well, and that makes records of his voice worth millions, if we can register it."

In the radio cabin, strange groans and mutterings began again.

"There!" the man acclaimed. "We don't know that messages sent out on the radio at the various wave lengths vanish completely. They are received by sets all over the country. But then what becomes of them? Why aren't they still wafted on the air through which they were sent? If they are, this is the likeliest place of all for them to come. The Sargasso Sea, the Port of Missing Ships. The Port of Missing Voices, too!"

To his words, the radio made apt commentary, for a second message of bygone days came in. From clamorous noises emerged:

. . . so Freddy Frog said to Peter Rabbit. . . .

"A bedtime story!" chortled the ex-Flapper, as more of the message followed. "I used to know them all by heart when I was a little girl. That one used to be a favorite of mine three or four years ago. I vow I haven't heard that very one since!"

Even with due allowances made for lapses in the ex-Flapper's chronology, it was agreed that the bedtime story could not be a current one. Then the radio voice shifted suddenly, raucously. Soothing accents gave way to this shout:

. . . World Series . . . first inning . . . eighth . . . Yanks to . . . Babe Ruth up . . . popped foul into the grandstand and . . . caught by elderly gentleman, who escaped with the coveted ball from the clutches of the police. . . .

With immense pride, the Professor arose. "I," he announced, "was that elderly gentleman. The incident occurred four years ago, my friend, I still treasure that ball!"

It now seemed established beyond

the shadow of a doubt that the witchery of the seaweed-shrouded Sargasso Sea was indeed forcing the dead past to exhume its dead.

II

THE haggard radio operator gulped down a cup of coffee, removed his headpiece and reported to his chief who had returned to the radio room after a few hours' sleep.

"Is this yesterday or year before last, Mr. Platt?" inquired the harassed Lewis. "Home and static were never like this."

The skipper grinned. "Keep going, Lewis," he encouraged. "I think we're getting warm. And have the phonograph always ready. Take a record of everything just as you have been. I'm changing our course a trifle to see if that will help us catch the message we want."

It did. When the ship's reckoning was dead on longitude 30°, latitude 30°, the near-miracle occurred.

Lewis, dozing over his set, was wakened by the faint, ethereally beautiful notes of a tenor voice. Strengthening it with his amplifier, he caused the phonograph to engrave it in wax.

* * * *

When the exhausted Lewis played the Berni record to a feverishly excited audience that afternoon, Beatrice Berni wept with emotion as she recognized the golden tones. Signor Rizzi, the impresario, swore between bursts of voluble Italian ravings that it was indeed the resurrected voice of the great tenor.

With unsurpassed eagerness, Glen Platt had drawn Beatrice out of the crowd in the cabin and into the companionway. He swept her into his arms.

"Now, my dearest," he whispered exultingly, "I can say what I've held back. I love you, Bee. Will you marry me now?—now we've succeeded?"

The kiss she gave him back for his

was all the answer needed, but when she caught her breath again, she asked, "Have we surely succeeded?" But Platt only laughed happily.

III

As the "Atlanta" steamed triumphantly into New York harbor, a steward slipped into the cabin of the Impresario. From under his white coat he drew a phonograph record.

"I got it," he grinned. "Th' Berni record. I swiped it when they laid it down after playing it. They think it's with the other records in the safe."

"Here, here," the Impresario blustered. "What concern have you with this business? What do you know of Berni or his voice? What right have you to ask a share?"

"I got the record, ain't I?" the steward came back insolently. "An' if anybody gets gay, I break it. Besides I used to hang out in th' next flat to Berni down in Rivington Street before he got famous singin'. While he was practicin', I used to play the phonograph all th' time, an' that's what put him off it so hard we got this monopoly on his voice now."

"I think you have a claim," smiled Rizzo suavely. "We will work together and share alike. But keep out of the way of the Berni girl. She might recognize you."

"I'll do that," the other agreed. "I thought once or twice she had me checked in spite of me mustache."

IV

RIVINGTON STREET on a hot summer night is no bed of roses, although lined as it is with garden truck-laden pushcarts, it is the best the lower East Side can provide in the way of a bower. Through its medley of noises and smells and the shabby, sheltering life with which its sidewalks teem, a girl and a man hurriedly threaded their way on the night of the day the "Atlanta" had made port.

"Here it is—my old home." Beatrice Berni turned into the dark, narrow doorway of a musty tenement house. Glen Platt followed, striving his hardest to forget that he was ever fastidious.

"After all," the girl called back over her shoulder in a voice that tried hard to sound brave, "this wasn't so bad."

They tiptoed up a gloomy staircase and halted before a door on the third floor landing. She opened it with a key. "I'm glad now father kept this old room. Be quiet now, Glen. There's a light in Frank's room."

"Are you certain you recognized your old neighbor in that steward?" Platt whispered. "I hope like thunder you did. Anyway, Bee, it's our last chance. Somebody certainly got away with that record, and it'll be a long time before I've got the money to tap the air over the Sargasso Sea again. And then it would be too late."

"I'd wait for you," the girl promised.

Voices were raised in the next room.

"I'll take care of that," the Impresario was heard giving assurance. "Nobody will believe their radio story and I will pledge my word this record was one made by Berni shortly before his death and just discovered among effects he had willed, me, his manager and friend."

"Good!" came the steward's voice. "I guess this'll fix us up for life. Let's try over the record once to be sure. Won't be noticed."

The listeners heard a phonograph wound; then the scrape of a needle, an opening chord and the voice of

Berni, vibrant and melodious. Beatrice behind him, Platt made for the room next door, pushing through the door.

"Come on, you crooks! Give back that record!" he demanded.

The Impresario turned pale but the steward snatched the record from the machine.

"No y' don't," he snarled. "You don't get nothin' on me!"

With a twist of a wrist, he sailed the precious record out of the window, out into Rivington Street three stories below.

While Platt and the girl stood gasping, the conspirators made a dash for the door. They were heard scuttling away down a rear fire-escape.

The man and the girl sadly descended the stairs "to pick up the pieces as tokens," as Bee put it.

V

THOSE who don't know her well, cannot understand why Mrs. Glen Platt, who was Beatrice Berni, daughter of the great tenor, motors all the way downtown to Rivington Street to do her marketing. Some say it's because she lived there in the days before her late father became famous; others, that not even a wealthy woman can resist bargains.

But her friends can relate that Bee Platt owes a debt of gratitude to the pushcart men of Rivington Street, particularly to the little Italian whose cart is always full of tender lettuce and greens so soft that a phonograph record, thrown from a window three stories above, might light in that pushcart and not break.



NEVER worry about losing your wife's love until she admits to her women friends that you are a fine husband.



At the Dance

By André Saville

THE brown-eyed débutante in the pink dress was wondering whether the young man with the curly hair and gray eyes would ask her to supper. . . .

The young man with the curly hair and gray eyes was wondering whether they were going to serve any champagne. . . .

The middle-aged man with the black moustache and the gardenia in his buttonhole was wondering how he could make the acquaintance of the brown-eyed débutante in the pink dress. . . .

The tall, fair woman with the necklace of black pearls was watching every move of the middle-aged man with the black moustache and the gardenia in his buttonhole. . . .

The terribly devoted couple, who had been together all evening, were swearing their undying affection for the seven hundred and eighty-first time. . . .

The florid-faced, rather stout gentleman, who had just arrived, was wondering whether he had come to the right place. . . .

The hostess was wondering how the account of the affair would look in the morning paper. . . .

The host was wondering how soon he would be able to sneak away, unobserved. . . .

The waiter with the bald head and shaggy eyebrows was wondering why people ever gave dances. . . .



He Is All of Seven Men

By Banbury Cross

HE is all of seven men parceled into one,
Seven lusty fellows bundled in a bag,
Here's a priest and here's a knave and here's a simpleton,
A roisterer, a proper sort, a poet, and a wag.

His forehead is a cardinal, his eyes betray a wit,
His nose is just the type of nose that tells the exquisite,
His mouth is part a scoundrel and a dreamer and a clown,
While his general appearance is a man-about-the-town.

He is all of seven men tumbled into one—
Damned if I can understand how the thing is done.

The Casanova Shanty

By *Weare Holbrook*

I

WHEN Luther Mellish and Mattie Hutt were married, everyone said that it was a perfect match. Both families were satisfied, which is unusual.

Luther bought a farm and, contrary to the rural tradition, built a house that was better than his barn. Mattie reveled in this house; it was so big that there was always something for her to do, and she enjoyed doing it. She was a good wife and a good housekeeper. No one ever saw Luther going around with buttons off; there was never any dust on the top of the piano.

The farm kept Luther busy for the first few years, but he was such an easy man to get along with that he had no difficulty in keeping good help, and before long the farm was practically running itself. Luther found himself with whole hours of spare time on his hands, so he did what he had always wanted to do: he read.

It wasn't Mattie's fault that she had been born without a fondness for books. She couldn't help it, and she wasn't going to pretend, the way some of these club ladies did. She remembered—she would never forget it to her dying day—the first time that she had seen Luther actually angry. It happened in the parlor. She was dusting the mantel, and Luther was sitting in the Morris chair, reading "Bab Ballads." For fifteen minutes he had not moved except to turn a page, while she had been busily sweeping the hearth, straightening

the andirons, arranging the bric-a-brac. Mattie felt that to him she was non-existent, in spite of the little tidying sounds and the tune she hummed. A sudden anger made her cheeks hot. He must realize that she was superior to print and paper; at least, he must realize that she was there. She wanted to show him, with a single gesture, her contempt for books. Leaning over the back of his chair, she looked at the narrow fringe of verse, the long, waltzing words, the chorused repetitions.

"What silly stuff!" she said airily. "If you must read, why don't you read something worth while?"

Luther snapped the book shut, and stood up. His face was white. "Worth while!" he shouted. "You tell me—!" For a moment he choked and his lips moved without sound. He looked at her despairingly. Then he sat down and opened his book again. "Go on and play with your brooms," he remarked. There was a terrible calmness in his tone. The storm had passed, but she knew that it had drawn him away from her a little.

As time went on, Mattie found herself further and further from her husband. That slim volume of poetry had acted as a wedge, splitting their lives apart. More books crowded into the breach, until there was a whole library between them. When she talked to Luther, he was pleasant but preoccupied. He was not interested in her ideas; what was worse, he made a pitifully obvious effort to appear interested.

"Do you know what I believe?" she said one night as they were lying in the darkness, waiting for sleep to come. "I believe Mrs. Lescher didn't die a natural death, at all." She spoke in an excited whisper. This was gossip; this was scandal. Surely, if he were human, he would listen, and listen eagerly, to what she was about to say.

"What makes you think so?" Luther asked. He said it with such earnestness that it gave her a little thrill of triumph. It was like old times: Luther, waiting for her words, wanting to know what she thought; Luther listening actively instead of passively.

"She died so suddenly," Mattie explained, "and no one ever did know exactly what was the matter with her. And then, almost before she had been decently buried, Mr. Lescher went and married that young school teacher who had been boarding with them."

"Well, he had to have someone to look after the children," argued Luther. His voice sounded sleepy and impatient, but it was a satisfaction even to have him disagree; it showed that he had been listening with his mind.

"He didn't either," she contradicted spiritedly. "Both grandparents wanted to take the children as soon as she died. No, sir, I think that he killed her to get her out of the way, or else she found out what was going on between him and that girl, and committed suicide."

"Maybe so," Luther admitted. The bed-springs tinkled as he rolled over and burrowed his face against his pillow.

"I think he killed her," repeated Mattie, after a pause. "They'd been married for fourteen years, and he was tired of her. I don't blame him. I claim a man ought to be allowed to change wives occasionally." For an instant she was shocked into silence by what she had said. Then, breathlessly, she continued, "It must be aw-

ful for a man to have to live with the same woman for fourteen years."

She waited tensely for Luther's response. Would he protest with that hollow gallantry that husbands affect even when there is no audience, or would he play the cynic and agree with her?

"Luther," she called softly, "did you hear what I just said?"

"Uh-huh." His mouth was half muffled by the pillow, and his words were blurred. "Thought it must be awful for a man to have to live with the same woman for fourteen years."

Mattie heard the clock ticking far away in the bath-room. Wasn't he going to say anything more? He was falling asleep, thinking that she meant it; perhaps he was already asleep. She raised herself on her elbow.

"Luther," her voice trembled, "I didn't mean it. I didn't mean what I said."

He stirred heavily, and his hand fumbled against her. "Yes, yes," he murmured, patting her shoulder, "I know." Pat-pat-pat, and silence and darkness.

Later, Luther awakened to hear her sobbing. He drew the covers over his head, and hurried back to sleep.

It was only one of many nights.

II

MATTIE didn't know much about literature, but she knew what she didn't like. In the first place, \$150 was an outrageous price for Luther to pay for a dozen books, and in the second place, they were outrageous books. The fact that they were Casanova's Memoirs meant nothing to her. When Luther bought the set, she glanced through it, curious to discover the reason for his extravagance. Then, with horrified fascination, she read one volume from cover to cover, and delivered an ultimatum.

"I won't have such books in the house," she declared.

"All right," replied Luther. His

acquiescence disappointed her. She had expected an argument; she had half-hoped for a "scene." Instead, he ordered a load of lumber, and with the help of Fred Hand, the hired man, he built a snug little shanty near the barn. It had a large window in the north wall, and was lined with shelves—shelves for Casanova and many other books. Luther moved his Morris chair out there, and installed a heater against cold weather.

After her venture in censorship, Mattie seldom saw her husband except at meal-time. She wondered whether it would be possible to make him miss her, whether he would not appreciate her more if she went away for a while. She decided to try it; at least, there was nothing to lose.

One evening as she and Luther and the hired man were eating supper, she said, "Aunt Emma wants me to go with her to visit the folks in Chicago for a couple of weeks. I think I'll do it."

"Sure, you ought to do it," agreed Luther. "You'll have a chance to see some good shows while you're there." He reflected for a moment. "We can batch along all right while you're gone, I guess. I know I can eat Fred's cooking, but I don't know whether he can eat mine."

The hired man laughed shyly. "I'll cook for the both of us," he said.

III

It was a month before Mattie returned from her two weeks' visit in Chicago, for she wanted to give Luther ample time to grow impatient.

Impatient he may have been, but there were no reproaches when he met her at the depot. He seemed glad to see her, kissed her heartily on both cheeks, took her bag, opened the car door for her . . . but there was something impersonal about it all; she felt that it was merely the little drama called "Meeting a Relative" which is enacted at depots a million

times a day. Perhaps at home she would be closer to him.

Entering the kitchen, she flung off her furs and glanced about the room. The geraniums were bright, as malodorous as ever; everything was just as she had left it. Fred Hand leaned awkwardly in the doorway, smiling his welcome.

"Well!" she laughed breathlessly, "it looks as if you boys had been good housekeepers."

"Fred can *cook!*" declared Luther. "Mattie, I'll bet none of your Chicago cafés could beat one of Fred's dinners. I'd let you keep him for the kitchen if he wasn't such a good farmer."

Fred reddened under his tan. "I used to work in a Harvey eating-house," he explained modestly.

"Why, I never knew that," cried Mattie in astonishment. It occurred to her that she knew very little about Fred, although he had lived with them for nearly three years. He was a silent, serious young man, and apparently had no background. She had come to think of him as a part of the farm, like the livestock; he fitted in so. "I never knew that," she repeated. "Luther, this winter when there isn't much to do around the place, maybe Fred could help me with the kitchen-work . . . that is, if he wants to."

"Not a bad idea," remarked Luther. "How about it, Fred?"

"I'd just as soon." There was neither eagerness nor reluctance in his tone.

* * *

Fred Hand made himself very useful to Mattie during the winter months. But he was not a brilliant conversationalist, and, with Luther immured in the shanty and her house-work reduced to almost nothing, the old brooding loneliness descended upon her again.

As a means of inspiring Luther with a crying need for her presence, the Chicago trip had been a failure. It had served only to reveal the

culinary abilities of the hired man, and her own importance in the household had decreased proportionately. Yet she did not feel jealous of Fred. There was nothing of the aggressive usurper about him. He simply did what he was told to do, and she was glad of his help. When the work in the kitchen was done, he returned immediately to the barn or to his attic bedroom.

It was one stormy afternoon as he was starting out of the house that she said, "There's a lot of new magazines in the parlor, Fred. Don't you want to look at them?" Fred was properly grateful for the invitation. "Why, yes, mom. Thanks." He strode heavily across the linoleum, but when he reached the hardwood floor he tiptoed uneasily, and almost slipped on the small rug in the hall. Half an hour later, glancing into the parlor, she saw him sitting stiffly on the edge of a small chair, with a needlework magazine in his great brown hand. He turned the pages abstractedly and stared at the advertisements with bland eyes. When she entered the room, he rose and placed the magazine on the table exactly as he had found it. "I got to look after the stock," he announced abruptly. "Much obliged for letting me see them magazines."

* * *

While Mattie was in Chicago with Aunt Emma, she had seen some good shows, as Luther predicted. One play in particular had impressed her; indeed, as time went on, she thought about it more and more. "The Neglected Wife" was the name of it, and though it ended happily, there was much tragedy in it. She felt that it might have been written about herself. "How true! How true!" she had thought as she sat in the theatre, and tears had filled her eyes.

Now, back on the farm, the play re-enacted itself in her mind by day and by night. It was a story which has been the theme of countless books, melodramas and pictures,—

the story of a woman who is driven to desperate measures by the indifference of her husband. In "The Neglected Wife," the heroine had finally aroused her husband's love by playing the wicked vampire with another man. True, it was a love which sprang from jealousy, but it was better than no love at all, and when the curtain fell, all was well.

Consciously and unconsciously, Mattie compared herself with the woman in the play. The latter had certain advantages: She lived in the city, where it was possible to put on the war-paint and go man-hunting at any time, where the streets were full of handsome, unscrupulous men who were waiting for something to happen. Here on the farm, there was only Fred.

Fred did not look like the "other man" in a play. He was quiet, but his quietness had none of the catlike suavity of the stage villain. He was strong, but she never had seen him in a noble, statuesque pose; he was too busy to think about his body, and he always chose the grubbing, unbeautiful, necessary tasks. Handsome he was, with clear skin, pink in the winter and brown in the summer. His teeth were clean and even; white teeth made for biting red meat.

But his pale blue eyes were disappointing. In their direct and honest gaze was the same elusive quality that one finds in the flickering glances of a shifty-eyed person. It seemed impossible to establish a mental contact with him; yet he had none of the fascination of an enigma.

Mattie often wondered what he was thinking about, but she never cared greatly. He probably thought about her; naturally he would, since he saw her so often. She realized that she was spending more time with Fred than with her husband, but in spite of this, Fred was still the same strange, dull hired man who came in for meals and didn't speak unless he was spoken to.

She couldn't figure him out, and in

fact, it wasn't until Spring that she attempted to. She met him down by the gate one warm March morning as she was coming from the mail-box. He was repairing the fence, wrestling with a heavy reel of barbed-wire.

"Here's something you can have, Fred." She tossed him a mail-order pamphlet.

He caught it and, after a brief scrutiny, thrust it into his hip-pocket. "Thank you, mom," he said, returning to the wire.

Mattie let her body sway idly against the unlatched gate, and watched him uncoil a strand from the reel. "How is it you never get any letters," she asked.

"Me?" responded Fred in surprise. "I never write any."

"I should think a young fellow like you would have a girl somewhere," she said teasingly.

"Nope." His face was quite serious.

"Didn't you ever have a girl?"

"I was married once," he replied. She waited for him to say more, but he worked on in silence.

"Did she . . . die?" Mattie ventured at length.

"She run away."

As he straightened the wire, a barb scraped against his hand. He paused, watching the rich, red blood well out of the scratch, and then put his hand to his mouth.

"That's mean stuff to handle," observed Mattie sympathetically. "Luther ought to be out here helping you."

"I can manage it," said Fred.

"Your hand's bleeding, though. You ought to put something on it."

"It'll soon quit," he replied.

"I know, but you got to be careful; working with rusty wire. You better come up to the house and let me put on some iodine."

"It's all right now," he assured her.

"No, you come with me," she laughed, taking hold of his uninjured hand firmly. "Come on, I'm the doctor. I wouldn't want you to get lock-

jaw, 'cause then I wouldn't have anybody at all to talk with."

Obediently he followed her to the house. The scratch was still bleeding, and she washed it clean and dabbed the yellow black liquid along it. His great hand rested, relaxed, on hers. She moved her finger-tips slightly against the inside of his wrist; it was surprisingly smooth and soft, like the neck of a baby. But his arm was leathery, and his palm was calloused to a shell-like hardness.

Bending over the wound, Mattie felt a tendril of her hair touch his face. She heard it brush against the stubble on his cheek with a tiny rasping sound. She smelled the clean, warm odor of fresh milk. Never before had she been so close to Fred.

"There!" she exclaimed, with a little pat of finality. "I think that will do. Does it feel all right?"

He looked at her with his blank, childlike eyes. "Yes," he replied. His voice was husky, and he continued to search her face. Mattie flushed; there were no words to answer a wordless question. She put her hands on his shoulders and pushed herself away from him gently. "Well, then . . ." she concluded, with an air of sending him on his way.

But Fred did not go. Indeed, as soon as she held him at arm's length, he drew her to him again. Her arms collapsed on his chest.

Mattie bowed her head unresistingly. "Fred!" she murmured. It was not an appeal; it was not a reproof.

"It is a long time since I have held a woman like this," he said softly.

"It is a long time since I have been held," she replied with a bitter little laugh, "like this."

The arm about her tightened, and the bandaged hand thrust her head back so that she looked him full in the face. She felt weak, passive . . . his doll.

"I want to kiss you once," he announced.

Mattie put her lips to his for a mo-

ment, and let her fingers stray over his cool hair. "He's not a hired man, now," she thought. "He's a man. All these months he has been here, and I have never realized it." Deliberately she avoided thinking of Luther, reading in the shanty.

"Fred," she whispered, "kiss me again."

* * * *

They were standing, fast in each other's arms, when Luther entered the kitchen. As Mattie heard the door close softly behind him, she opened her eyes. Over Fred's shoulder she saw her husband, his hand still on the door-knob, watching them.

With a stifled cry, she shrank away from Fred. The latter, without looking, sensed what had happened. Heavily, reluctantly, he turned to face Luther. The muscles of his neck were taut, and his lower lip writhed under white teeth.

They were caught—she and Fred—fairly caught. It was the ruse of "The Neglected Wife" all over again—a situation of which Mattie had often dreamed, but which in reality had

developed with such suddenness that she felt lost. It might bring Luther to his senses, but at what price? She was the heroine, but where were her lines, what was her business? The whole thing had been so involuntary. . . .

It seemed to Mattie that the two men stood staring at each other for an eternity. Then Fred made a helpless, hopeless gesture, letting his hands fall to his sides in the manner of one who offers no defense.

Luther walked slowly to the kitchen table, and bent over. The noise as he jerked open the table-drawer sounded like a thunderclap in the silent room. With ominous deliberation he rummaged in the hodge-podge of the drawer, and drew forth a broad-bladed knife. Mattie watched him as a cornered mouse might watch the slow creeping of a cat. Whimpering, she crushed her handkerchief against her mouth, and waited.

Luther inspected the knife casually, and glanced up at his wife with a cool smile. "Mattie," he said, "do you mind if I take this out to the shanty? I can't find my paper-knife."



To . . .

By A. Newberry Choyce

LIKE trees in places of delight,
Like fair trees in a staunch sweet grove,
My friends rise round me day and night
With the wide shelter of their love:

And ever as a flock of birds
Wing to the leafage they love best,
My thoughts among these lovely boughs
Fold happy plumes and come to rest.

And sing full-throated the heart's theme
As birds in favourite branches do:
One that I have, a nightingale
Sings in a tall pine, that is you.



The Costume of the Soul

By Grace Fallow Norton

A DELE wore her body as a bird wears its feathers. It kept her warm in this cold world and she flew on its wing. . . .

Fremont wore his body as a clown his costume. It fitted ill and was grotesque. But he used it as an accessory to point the comic side of the tragedy which was due to it. . . .

Edith wore her body disdainfully, as she might have worn an over-rich garment somewhat out of fashion. She felt that she did not need such finery in the severe intellectual life she had chosen. But once it came so close to her soul that it caught fire and slowly consumed. . . .

Henry treated his body with the sort of respect he would have given to a piece of furniture inherited from his ancestors. One could see that it did not touch him very closely. He was quite taken up with bridge-building. . . .

Frances was impatient at the idea of having a body. She reminded one of a child who had been made by its mother to wear an apron, but is hoping to grow big enough to go without it. She tore it on brambles, let it be patched, and was sullen when the patches showed. . . .

Joseph wore his body with a certain pride. It was well-proportioned, healthy and strong, and gave him a distinction he would not otherwise have enjoyed. . . .

Flora took her rollicking body from revel to revel. It ate so well, it drank so well, that after a while it grew florid, and finally heavy and gross. Yet she continued to talk about love as though it were a matter for the soul alone. . . .

Richard accepted his body with philosophic resignation. It in no way represented him. It suffered from its inferiority to his spirit and in spite of his admonitions was always somewhat timid as well as unprepossessing and did awkward things when embarrassed. But his soul was distinguished and fine to such a degree that his close friends and all those who fell under its charm came to believe that he was handsome. . . .

Antoinette wore her gay body gaily when it was young. When it began to fade she clung to it anxiously and watched its changing moods as one might watch those of a dear relative. She sacrificed herself in order to offer it delicacies. She planned with solicitude the garments it should wear. She sought to distract it with little pleasures from its fatal determination. She even came to lay before it propitiatory offerings. . . .

Robert wore his body with an Oriental pride. It was so splendid, so strong, so richly suggestive of all wild animal power and grace, it won for him such astonishing worship from such unexpected quarters, that he came to think of it as intrinsically himself. Through the spectacular events of his life he trusted it to do everything for him and was always affirming to himself

that it succeeded. Yet a slight doubt hung its little pricking question-mark in his breast. One day, the day of his first catastrophe, the doubt plunged deep, like a dagger. . . .

Margaret wore her beautiful body with delight, as she might have worn a pearl that had been given her. She listened dreamily to its music, smiled at its demands, granted them if they seemed reasonable, and went her ways. In return it grew to have confidence in her, offered her its best and increased in beauty. The radiant unison of her body and soul seemed like a veritable marriage. It made one suppose that the separation would be a wrench. But when the moment came, Margaret, apparently without a thought, threw her beautiful body down and went away on the wings of the wind.



Contrast

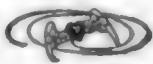
By Eugene C. Dolson

IN HIGH PLACES

HERE, in the valley,
Green Spring went by
And a rose-tree blossomed,
Out of reach of the winds.
On the hilltop yonder,
Pines were splintered and wrecked
By a whirlwind blast
From the lungs of the storm;
So unstable is Fortune
In high places.

ABOVE THE MIST

*The lowlands are oozy and dark—
Haunts of the black bat
And the lizard. . . .
Banks of cold gray fog
Hang over marshy flats,
The moon hides her face,
And the sun recedes
Behind a curtain of rain.
They who stand in full light
Stand on peaks of the world.*



Disarmed

By G. Vere Tyler

HE was a woman of whom it had been said that all men fell in love with her; in a way that was no doubt true. Her languid loveliness and pronounced, wholly conscious, sense appeal, represented to the masculine eye a goal to be reached.

She was well equipped for the rôle she essayed. There was a radiance about her that seemed to flow out of her gold colored hair and shine over her. But while she shone, she also possessed a tranquillity that made her appear restful. This was practiced deception. She was merely deadly. She knew her own power, rested in it, and so suggested rest. A good deal of her work was done through her eyes. Sky blue in color, they could emit a dream that subdued, or shoot out a gleam that penetrated. On the whole her nature was gentle and sympathetic. Old people, children and animals loved her. Through her men were inspired to love themselves. Perhaps she felt this.

At any rate, the emotions she awakened soon disgusted or wearied her. Scorning the weakness of men, she was indifferent to what befell them at her hands. Also she was decent: once she had finished with a man, she put him aside half in reverence, gave him a decent burial in her heart. To the winged ones, those still fluttering—and so flattering her interest—she was both kind and cruel. Sometimes she petted them; sometimes she used a whip. Some men treat a favored dog that way, first pet and indulge, allow it to keep in the way, and then without rhyme or reason, twist its ears or shut it out in

the cold—snow or rain—to hear it whine, see its misery, humiliation.

That kind of thing is a low order of power. When it came to Lucile Harrington's treatment of men, it was a low order of power.

Ellis Melbourne had been in love with her for years. For years he had accepted her pettings and at her pleasure had his ears pulled, or stood out in the cold—snow or rain. He had whined on the outside, and when she opened the door to him, come in fawning. For years the play of his fine intelligent eyes had been one of her diversions. Sometimes for months she never saw him, and during such periods thought little about him. Then she would run across him somewhere, or he would show up at her home. The look in his eyes, whatever it was, would tickle her fancy and she would be quite happy in delighting in her power over him. The game would be on again.

One day she heard from a friend who was having tea with her that Ellis was to be married.

"Married!" she gasped.

"Certainly," returned her friend coolly. "Why not?"

"But married to whom?"

"Oh, a little nobody—somebody's typist or something. The usual these days—working girl. That used to mean scrubbing the kitchen floor, pans and kettles; not so now. Poor Ellie was peddling his wares—you know he's been doing very well recently with his short stories, whatever he does, and he met her at some publisher's office. They are as thick in New York, these uppish little

fledglings, as squirrels in a forest!"

"What's her name? What's the name of this particular squirrel?" Lucile's loveliness had paled, and her voice was sharp.

"My dear, are you really asking me the name of a little office girl? I can hardly recall those of my own set."

"Most of them are not worth recalling."

"I wouldn't talk that way, Lucile. It isn't nice. You're cross about Ellie getting over you, breaking away at last."

"I never cared the snap of my finger about Ellis Melbourne, Nita!"

"No, but you cared a dozen snaps of your finger about his caring for you—making a fool of him."

"Possibly."

"Well, he's waked up from that dream and rolled over into another. I can just picture him," half closing her eyes, "holding a young girl in his arms, his sensitive face saddened by a fleeting memory of you."

"You are quite poetic over it," sneered Lucile.

"Yes, I've taken to writing poetry since Horace deserted me for his squirrel. They're awfully designing, these young things. Did you know they're all practicing baby talk?"

"Nita!"

"Well, my dear?"

"There will be one routed fledgling in the gay city of New York!"

"Good luck to you, Lucile."

"The idea of Ellis throwing himself away!"

"Go ahead and save him!"

"I will!" putting down an unlighted cigarette. "What's my first move?"

"The idea of *you* asking me what to do about a man! And," rising, "I must be going. Horace and I are going to meet for dinner and one more final discussion of *our* situation."

"Situation?" Lucile was rather lost in thought. But she got up and managed to collect herself sufficiently to say, "Good luck to you, dear!"

"What we mature women should do," said the departing lady, "is to

rise up in a body and have all these young things drowned. They're as annoying as gnats!"

Lucile forgot to reply. Her mind was on the telephone.

At the Telephone

"So it's really true, then? . . .

"That you are going to be married! . . .

"Married! . . .

"To forget me! Nonsense! . . .

"Well, I can't see all that, Ellis, but suppose you bring her to call? . . .

"Why not? . . .

"Hurt her! How could seeing me do that? . . .

"Don't be absurd! . . .

"How ridiculous! That doesn't interest me one bit! . . .

"Why should I be angry? I'm as placid as a dove. . . .

"It isn't my affair! . . .

"But I want you to bring her! . . .

"Why, any afternoon to tea. . . .

"Why not Thursday? I'll hold it open for you. . . .

"Oh, about five. . . .

"All right, I'll expect you!" . . .

Thursday—5 P.M.

Lucile in apricot yellow ornamented in gold beads was shedding her radiance. A little pale, a little languid, yet eager. Today the death of the squirrel and the truant who had run it to cover.

She was moving about. She felt restless. "Youth," she said aloud, recalling that she had spent hers. She became flippant: "Well, you can't eat your pie and have it. Tra, la, la." She started to put on a record but paused suddenly. She was not feeling composed; and she must be composed absolutely. Figuratively she aimed her gun to make sure that her hand was steady. And then she took her seat, a flaming image on the purple velvet couch of many sofa pillows where often her battles were planned, and some fought, victor or vanquished, to a finish. For a moment

or two, glancing about or closing her eyes, she revelled in her own personality, her God-given splendor. And then for some reason it all, herself, weighed on her as something old, wistful. She felt sad. A tenderness for herself concerned her. She wondered why.

Presently she leaned forward, laid her arms on her lap, and brought her hands together in an affectionate clasp.

"I know now," she said aloud, "that I always intended to marry Ellis. I've never actually admitted it, perhaps I never actually knew it. But I know it now, now that I've got to fight for him. I, Lucile Harrington, with two husbands in the background and the field to pick from, fighting to hold a man. Nita would say 'interesting.' It's more than that."

It was more. The fine pedigreed dog, obedient, faithful at the feet of its master, willing to stand outside in the cold—snow or rain—and when he was let in lick his hand. That was what Lucile had planned,—not quite in that way perhaps, but the love and abject slavery of a charming fellow when she was tired of her part in the world and ready to retire. Bungalow, flowers. All women of her kind dream of a bungalow and flowers and a worshipful slave. A man dragged with her from the world. Hers. Secure. And then. . . .

Promptly at five they came in. The girl a bit flustered—that was easily seen. A timid girl, very simply gowned, a little suit, dark, and a small hat like a cap. A young face white and excited, almost lustrous in agitation. Fear was written there, too, fear of the beautiful woman of whom she had heard so much and whose pictures she had seen.

One look at that face, and Lucile felt stabbed; something in the invisible about her had stabbed her. She felt weak, strange.

Ellis was standing quite rigid as his fiancée accepted the courtesies of

the woman he had loved for seven years. Since he was the age of the girl, twenty, and in whose presence lay memories, memories crowding upon him of honeyed sweetness and bitter pain—the pat on the head, the twist of the ear. He felt a moment's undoing.

As their eyes met, Lucile knew this, realized it fully. But there was no exultation in it, nothing that she had expected. She had been stabbed; the wound hurt. What was this?

When they were seated, she glanced about a moment, a little distraught, bewildered. A cigarette. She knew where they were over there on her desk. But instead she said that she was out of cigarettes. Rosalie was busy toasting muffins; it was dreadful if muffins burned. Would Ellis go out for cigarettes?

"Certainly, yes, of course."

The attractive coat, raglan, and the soft hat, brown; giving him the look she admired most. As she watched him getting into this coat, brown hat in hand, she had memories, memories of his lips, kisses—the beautiful mouth—she had always thought it an especially beautiful mouth—hot, feverish lips, cold hurt lips. . . .

When he was gone she turned to the girl. "Now," she said with a light pat of her hands, "we will have a little talk! You must tell me about yourself. You naughty girl bent on marrying my best friend. Did you know Ellis and I have been friends for years?"

"Oh, yes!" A little gasp.

"What has he told you of me?"

"That he has loved you for seven years."

"Yes? What else?"

"He said you cared nothing for him, and he wanted rest from you. That is why he turned to me."

"To rest himself!" She laughed. "Do you like that? It's all nonsense, though! Tell me about you, all about yourself!"

"There is little to tell," answered

the girl, staggered anew by the splendor of a woman she was to give a man rest from. Her task diminished. She herself diminished, the all of her as far as Ellis was concerned. It became unreal, vanishing. The gold costume, the gold hair, the radiance. The strange, wilful light of blue eyes as it were dissolving her.

"Oh, there must be a good deal!" argued Lucile, indulgently.

Her deadly blue eyes were straight in the russet brown ones of the girl. Russet brown eyes, brown skin, dusky color in smooth cheeks, old rose color. Youth.

"Just work, that's all it's been, work," she heard the owner of the assets of her recapitulation saying dully.

"Really? Were you brought up in New York?"

"Oh, no," and she named a town, adding that her family were poor, very poor. She came here at a better salary. Her mother. Tears in the russet brown eyes, the old rose of the cheeks almost purplish, excited little face. But after all insignificant, a girl, just a girl, a duplicate, small, plain little dress, hat like a cap, a girl, that was all, almost like a manikin, millions of them in New York, working in offices, millions of them, simple, why nothing, just girls, this one just a girl.

And Ellis. . . . How flies buzzed and swam around in a forest. Only have a picnic and you soon saw how many there were. And these girls. New York was their forest and the men their picnic. And how they had sprung up, just like flies, some with fancy wings, some with colorless wings—this one. Flies in the forest; girls in New York. How the dusky color in this girl's cheeks burned in her eyes, holding them. The beauty of youth. Ah! Flies in the forest; girls in New York. Flies gobbling up the food. Swarming. Girls gobbling up the men. Swarming. This girl. Ellis. Nita was right.

They should all be drowned. Swat the fly. Drown the girl. She laughed. Her head was whirling. . . .

For some reason she had never been able to swat a fly, innocent looking things, foolish, happy in the sunshine. Just wanting to live. Could she drown a girl? Foolish, happy, just wanting to live. To live yes, but at the expense of others also wanting to live, live on. Why shouldn't she annihilate one! Why not? Involuntarily the fingers of her left hand closed. She could. And why shouldn't she? This calm, quiet little thing sitting here with her half startled face was a thief. All these girls springing up like mushrooms after a rain were thieves.

Hadn't this one stolen her property, something that had been hers? She saw again the lips of this something that had been hers, feverish, hot. She felt them on her own, clinging there, sometimes in rapture, sometimes in anguish, kisses that—she knew it now—she had counted on to rest the fatigue of her vanished youth, make up for the loss of all those things that had gone to make up her life. Robbed. Yes, this girl was a thief. She looked at her. Her head whirled again. No, she wasn't a thief. She was nothing, nothing at all, simple, insignificant, just a girl. A doggerel in her mind: "Every dog has his day. Every dog has his day." Nonsense.

This girl was a thief. Hadn't she taken Ellis from her? Of course she had. A thief. No, no, no! Only a little dog having its day. And the funny part was she didn't even know she was a little dog having its day. No little dog ever did until its day was over. She hadn't known. Somebody ought to tell this girl she was a little dog having her day, impress it on her, and how soon it would be over, impress it on her, and that she must revel in it while it lasted. Why didn't she tell her? She! Absurd.

But Ellis ought to tell her, Ellis ought to guard this young thing—

how sweet all young things were, kittens, even little pigs, so pink. Yes, Ellis ought to guard this young thing that he had captured to give himself rest from her, this captured girl sitting here looking frightened. Something surged in her heart, something turbulent that wanted to overflow. The little narrow face, awed, frightened. So young. Once—long enough ago now—she had been young. How easy to suffer greatly when one was young. Young. Youth. She wanted, she in her splendid yellow dress, she flaming, shedding radiance, to take this small bundle of youth in her arms and feel of it, feel of what she had lost. To hold youth in one's arms! She understood now. What she was feeling was what Ellis had felt, the desire to hold in his arms youth and have it rest him.

She got up a bit excited.

"My dear," she said, "this is shocking, very rude, but I must ask you to go. I am feeling quite ill. Dizzy. I am subject to it. You will go, won't you? It's very rude, I know. But you will excuse me. No, no, there is nothing you can do, nothing. Only please go. You will meet Ellis

in the hall or at the elevator. Tell him that I am ill, quite ill, that I had to ask you to go. You must come again, both of you. Tell Ellis to take you to a lovely place for dinner!"

"You are sure there is nothing I can do?" Excitedly.

"Yes, yes, quite sure. Only go before Ellis returns." She was half shoving her out. "I must be alone. Pardon my not seeing you to the door!"

The girl, trustful, frightened, almost fled from her, and she stood gazing after her, looking rather stricken, blighted; somewhat pathetic. She was holding a crumpled dream in her hand. She was very beautiful, though, strangely so, her radiance softened yet still shining. Mother love, perhaps...

But when Rosalie entered with a blank look on her face the radiance expired. She took up her everyday life—everybody does. She told Rosalie to hand her her cigarettes over there on the desk, to serve tea, and telephone Mrs. Vernon—Mrs. Vernon was Nita—to come over as soon as she could; she wanted to see her about something particular.



Miser

By Mavis Clare Barnett

*YOU wear a crimson dressing-gown
Now the nights are cold.
I shall keep that dressing-gown
When it is old.*

*I could not burn two crimson sleeves
Where I've hid my face
In a little lamplit room,
Wanting your embrace.*



Aphrodite's Word-Book

By *Walter E. Sagmaster*

Love—an emotional current; *Marriage*—crossed wires.

Tête-à-Tête—heady conversation.

Kiss—a spark plug.

Woman—a man's rib; *Man*—a hypochondriac, imagining all sorts of discomforts and disabilities merely because of a missing rib; far better off without it, and yet never quite at ease until it is replaced—and then never for long.

Villain—a man whose love is not returned.

Fiancé—a man who cannot resist taking the last piece of cake.

Child—a duty to society.

Money—something which will not buy love, but without which love soon loses its kick.

Love-Letter—something which a woman keeps carefully filed away for future reference—that is, that she may

be able in later years to convince a man that he is an ass, should there arise any doubt or controversy on the matter.

Hope-Chest—a centralized concentration of armament and ammunition, founded implicitly on the doctrine: "In times of peace prepare for war."

Flapper—the product of an incubator which has been placed by mistake in a blast-furnace.

Minister—an accessory after the fact.

Passion—at eleven P.M., the devil disguised as God; at nine A.M., God disguised as the devil.

Perfume—a woman's personality broadcasted (preferably at not to exceed two meters.)

Souvenir—an ordinary memory, alchemized by the glow of a grate fire.

Absence—the only love tonic that really works.



A BROADWAY mother's warning to her child—"If you're not good, the Shuberts'll get you!"



A BACHELOR is a man who has received his education by proxy.



THE verdict of a jury is the opinion of that juror who smokes the worst cigars.



Faithful Thomson

By Prudence O'Shea

I

THE crossing took five days, and for the first three Faithful kept rigidly within her cabin. But no one noticed. Then, when she had found that legs and feet have a practical value, she appeared at dinner in the public dining-room. And no one noticed that either. No one had ever noticed anything that Faithful Thomson had done or left undone . . . except old Hiram O'Connor.

She was pitifully shy; flushing upward as she followed the steward to her table, to the very roots of her greying hair, and downward to the feather-stitched edge of her navy-blue taffeta frock with its collar of imitation guipure lace. The further progress of the flush, allied with Faithful, was supremely uninteresting.

Faithful was taken to the table occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Burton. At dinner these good people dined alone, but for other meals three other Burtons . . . of varying ages . . . graced or disgraced the table. Mr. Burton, judging him by his wife, was still struggling with the rigors of unaccustomed dress clothes and had not put in an appearance; therefore it was his wife who glanced up and welcomed the newcomer with a smile.

"Good evening," she said brightly. "We haven't seen you before." She spoke with a Manchester accent.

"No." Faithful clasped and unclasped her strong hands nervously beneath the sheltering cover of the table-cloth; "no; I'm afraid I'm not much of a sailor."

"Really? . . . Been seedy?" Mrs. Burton's voice was clogged with good-natured commiseration.

"Yes; I certainly have been seedy."

"There now!" Mrs. Burton's obvious sympathy warmed Faithful to a sense of companionship. They talked spasmodically of the voyage, the people and the food; and after the first brief silence and in answer to a polite question Faithful found herself inundated with details of Mrs. Burton's husband, children and home. Finally she asked what day they reached Ireland.

"Wednesday, I think. Jack's crossed before. He says the first sight of Ireland is real pretty. All green. If it's not too early, we ought to get up to see the first sight of Ireland."

Something glowed for a second behind Faithful's austere eyes . . . warming them. Then she replied: "Oh, but . . . early or not early . . . I mustn't miss *that*."

"Are you Irish?"

"No; only the man I worked for in the States was. And he . . . he did me a very good turn when he died." She looked meaningfully toward Mrs. Burton, who nodded, and continued: "And besides, you hear a lot of Irish ballads and that sort of thing in the States, too. It gives you an idea of . . . well, I don't know . . . but an idea of . . . well, it makes you feel when you're on a ship that you're returning to a home that's missed you. That's silly, I know, seeing it's not my home, isn't it?"

"I don't think so."

"You see, when we first went to the States I was little more than a girl. I

was a girl, in fact. Thirteen. We went steerage. And lots of Irish people go steerage. Oh, yes . . . one way and another I've met lots of Irish people. And, as I said, I wouldn't miss that first sight of Ireland for anything. Particularly as you say it's so pretty." And Faithful smiled. It was a smile which suited her Gimbel's basement dress and knuckled hands. But behind it there was something else . . . something . . . was it wistful?

II

AFTER dinner, with night touching the decks of the liner as though she wore a velvet glove, Mrs. Burton sought Faithful out. She said: "Jack's playing poker" . . . and she smiled with a furtive pride at this instance of her husband's excesses . . . "so we can go on with our little talk."

And they talked . . . sitting in a sheltered corner and wrapped up well, their middle-aged heads showing above the collars of their big coats. Mrs. Burton complacently smiling and Faithful looking into the night and seeming to find in its warmth an individual benediction. . . .

From superfluities they passed to the things nearest to their hearts, Mrs. Burton telling Faithful how expensive a third child was. "The second can wear out all the first's things; but the *third!* . . . Oh, dear, dear! . . . New this and new that . . . you've never finished. Jack says . . . he's very playful, you know, when he likes . . . he says that to make buying the second outfit worth while we must have a fourth."

Both ladies smiled with illimitable meanings.

Then it was Faithful's turn, and she said: "See . . . what was I telling you about at dinner? . . . Oh, I know! About Mr. O'Connor. You see, as soon as I could leave school in the States I learned shorthand and typing and got a position with him. He'd a general store in a little town in Ohio. None of your

big towns for him! He was too mean, and he wouldn't have stood for the cost of living in a big town. Then the folks I crossed with, and who were kind of guardians to me, moved, and in time I lost all sight of them. And I was the only employee Hiram O'Connor could ever get to stay with him, he was so mean! . . . He skimped and skimped! . . . And talk about work! . . . From morning till night; and if any of his staff so much as went to a party or a ball game, he fired them!"

"I'd have left him."

"At first I thought I would, but where else could I go? . . . And I'd always been timid about changes. . . . You know how some people are. Then I started to get fond of his business . . . there was nothing else for me to do; and I should say that I put almost as much work into it as he did. Work . . . work! Nothing but work!"

"Jack wouldn't have let me."

"No; but you see I'd only myself."

Mrs. Burton turned her complacently kind eyes toward Faithful and said: "So, you've never been to a party or theatre in your life?"

"Never . . . at least, not a party which wasn't connected with work. I went to a party given by old Hiram to his staff one Thanksgiving. I was twenty-five at the time, and Hiram's firm was slowly prospering. But they were all old there . . . except one . . ."

Abruptly Faithful paused.

"Yes? And this one?"

"O!" Faithful looked up at the sky. It seemed to hang low with a bloom across it . . . and every star seemed suspended by an, invisible string. "There's nothing to tell about him. He was twenty-three and a traveling salesman. Bound to get on. I remember he took me home."

"Yes?" . . . the voice of Mrs. Burton was charged with heavy coquetry.

"Nothing, you know. He just took me home. He was married." Faithful suddenly laughed and added: "It's funny talking like this about things that happened so long ago. I'm . . . I'm

forty-two now; and I've worked fourteen hours a day practically ever since I started. So there's no harm in remembering things that . . . that hand you a laugh, is there?"

Again she stopped abruptly and seemed to think of something which she did not share with Mrs. Burton. "And then old Hiram died," she added.

"I should think so!" the little matron beside Faithful rustled. "And well he deserved it! . . . Living and working with never one pleasure and not letting others have pleasure either."

"Yes, but sometimes, for that very reason, I'm sorry for him."

"Oh, I don't know! If it wasn't his fault . . . yes. But it was. He . . . what is Jack's expression for people like that? . . . I know . . . old Hiram had *withered without blooming*. That's it . . . withered without blooming!"

Faithful was silent for a second, then she said slowly: "Yes . . . that is true. How . . . how *awful!*"

"Served him right. And then, when he died, you said at dinner that he did you a good turn?"

"Yes . . . he left me all his fortune. Getting on for a hundred and fifty thousand dollars! Thirty-four thousand pounds!"

"Good gracious!"

"Yes . . . so you see . . . perhaps when he did that he was sorry for having made me work so hard. And himself. Anyway, he did the next best thing. He put it in my power to play for the rest of my life."

"And shall you?"

"Well, of course. I don't know. I've been thinking I'll invest thirty thousand pounds, which leaves me with four for myself."

"Invest it in what? . . . One of those smart tea shops? Or a lingerie establishment?"

"No . . . oh, no! Those things are too new, and new ideas are strange to me. No. I daresay in the end I'll take a private hotel. I'm good at administrative work and organization. But I

shall do a good bit of looking about me first."

"And the four thousand?"

"Ah! . . ." Faithful's eyes softened as she looked again at the sky. She said: "Have you ever heard of the Blue Grotto at Capri? Well, I want to go there. And Venice, where you go everywhere by boat, and where the gondoliers sing as they steer you, and where the nights are like . . . are like . . . this, only much more so? I want to go there, too. And parts of Africa, where lilies as big as us grow wild and have such a heavy . . . fragrance . . . at night that you'd think you'd faint? . . . And Egypt, where there's no twilight, but where the moonlight is so blue that . . . that . . . that you feel . . ."

"Yes, they're very pretty." Mrs. Burton rose . . . a little surprised at Faithful's eloquence, but not shocked because she flattered herself upon her cosmopolitan mind. "Yes . . . very. So you're going there?"

"Oh, not definitely. I've made no plans."

"No?" Mrs. Burton waited until the other had gathered her coat about her chin and then together they moved toward their cabins. "And when you get to London?"

"I'm going to the Consort Hotel. It's in Bloomsbury. Very quiet. And from there I shall look about me and decide what to do."

"And you've no people to look up?"

"No."

The two ladies were silent, and Mrs. Burton paused beside the door leading to the corridor of cabins. Then she said: "Oh, well . . . I think I'll fetch Jack. Good night."

"Good night, Mrs. Burton."

III

INSIDE her room, Faithful switched on the light and slowly removed her taffeta dress. And with infinite care she hung it up behind the door by the two loops in the armholes. Then she

smoothed her moiré petticoat over her orderly hips and looked at herself in the mirror. She was conscious that a thought . . . or a fragment of a thought was evading her and troubling her somewhere at the back of her head.

She continued her undressing . . . rolling her lisle stockings into a neat ball. Then, switching the light off, she knelt beside her bed and, the habit of forty years heavy upon her, she thought her conventional prayer.

When she had finished she did not rise, but stayed upon her knees . . . pursuing the thought which worried her. Suddenly it came . . . with a sharp stab . . . to her memory.

She heard herself whisper, as though it were another woman speaking . . . "*Withered without blooming!*" and stirred and frightened she lifted her face to the night. She opened her eyes and tried to pierce the blackness about her. She felt that perhaps a miracle might happen in that stillness . . . that perhaps a kindly face might look down upon her and listen to her. "Dear God," she whispered passionately . . . "my God . . . oh, have I withered before I have bloomed?"

She rose and stumbled into bed . . . a terrible spirit of fear upon her.

* * *

But Faithful could not sleep and, with the fear still upon her, her memory hovered over the party which she had attended when she was twenty-five. It hesitated over outstanding details before it finally took in the occurrence as a whole.

She had been dark then . . . no grey or greying hairs at all. She had been . . . she forgot quite what she had been like, but she knew that her eyebrows had been as startlingly black as her hair. They had given her face an additional paleness and her eyes a certain sharpness. Some of old Hiram's staff had been afraid of her. "Bad-tempered eyebrows!" they had said. And now in the silence she laughed. That was a bad guess! . . . Bad-tempered? . . . *She!*

She thought of the young traveling

salesman. Carl Something. Carl . . . ah! . . . Bernheimer. Carl Bernheimer! German parentage, but American born. Stocky in figure, but with virility in every line of him. Even in his bristly hair. And a certain brutality in his features, though not in his expression. Greedy, perhaps, over things he wanted, but from what she remembered of her impressions at the time, a strain of poetry in him, too. Yes, Carl Bernheimer . . .

She even remembered her dress, lying there in the darkness. It would look funny now, of course, but then it had pleased her. . . . Pleased her more than she had admitted even to herself with the habit of austerity and frugality already on the incline . . . even at twenty-five. And Carl had looked at her several times.

There had been no dancing . . . Hiram wouldn't have allowed that . . . but there had been a fine supper and then some music. And everyone talked business. And one or two of the men had sung . . . not the women . . . and the air was heavy with the fumes of strong cigars and coarse tobacco from pipes. At ten Hiram had said that it was time to be thinking about bed; and everyone had made a move. And Carl had said: "Do you live far?" and she had answered naturally, though she had felt a little strange, "No, not far. Why?"

"I thought I'd like a walk, that's all."

"Then come along if you want to."

She had known that he wanted to. She knew that she wanted him to.

They had talked spasmodically . . . Carl not so much at his ease as she would have imagined. He told her that he was married and that it was a mistake to marry as early as he had. Twenty-three. Was she married?

No; she wasn't married.

At every lamp in the straggling street she had felt him look at her, and at the Colonial house where she had a room and boarded he said quite suddenly: "I'm coming up."

She had laughed with a feigned nat-

uralness as if it were quite the usual thing that he should come up, and had said: "Please yourself. But only for a few minutes."

"Surely only for a few minutes."

Everyone was in bed in the house and the place had seemed eerily quiet. . . . Strange how impressions, even more than facts, remained in one's mind sometimes for half a life-time. Yes, the place had seemed very quiet and the moon had shone into the gimcrack hall. She had said: "Can you see or shall I put the lights on?"

"No . . . don't put the lights on."

They had both spoken in whispers. Like spectres they had crept up the stairs. . . .

In her room, as she closed the door softly after them both, Carl had drawn her into his arms and kissed her as though that was what they both understood and wanted. It was what they both had wanted. And after that they had spoken hardly at all and Carl had kissed her many times. And when the clouds scurried from the face of the moon the room had been lighted palely and Faithful had opened her eyes to look at Carl; and already Carl was looking at her. Neither had smiled; and when the moon was veiled again they had closed their eyes slowly. . . .

She had said at some time then, in a whisper which enfolded them almost as closely as his arms: "You must go soon," and he had replied by kissing her mouth before he knew whether she had finished speaking or not. His youth and ardor called to her irresistibly and she had murmured "Carl!" with a new, inexplicable breathlessness.

"What?" . . . his voice had recalled her from the strange faintness. And she had moved away from him and had sat upon the edge of the bed trembling.

He had repeated: "What?" and when she could reply evenly she had said: "You must go now."

He had answered: "All right, I'm going," and had crossed to the dim square which was the window and had peered into the face of his watch. His

voice had been husky. And when he returned to her he kissed her once more and then left the room with scarcely a sound. Not a creak on the wooden stairs nor the faintest bang of the front door; not even the soft *clack* of the wired mosquito door beyond which responded so readily and so mischievously to the slightest touch. In silence Carl had irrevocably gone! . . .

But that night, and for many nights afterward, she had felt that strange breathlessness again. Like a call . . . warmth . . . youth. . . . Something that had no name disturbed her. She turned and turned again and flung the clothes from her to get cool. And her thoughts, crowding upon her, expressed themselves to a form which she visualized beside her.

She had said: "Why do you trouble me? . . . What is it?" and the form had replied: "Don't you know?"

She had paused. "Yes . . . I think I know," she had replied. "But it is so sweet . . . so disturbing. And it is no one's. No one has ever wanted this part of me. Until Carl . . . No one may ever want it again; but shall I always be fretted like this?" And the imaginary form had replied: "Always, while you are young. And when you are old you will give your soul . . . your life . . . to recall this wakefulness!"

"Shall I?" she had whispered back. And even when she slept her dreams had disquieted her. . . . And now her mind returned, over the chasm of years, to Mrs. Burton's words.

"Withered without blooming!" . . . No! . . . not herself! Old Hiram, perhaps, but not herself! It would be too cruel to let her glimpse . . . just for that one night . . . the ineffable sweetness of the bloom and then to snatch it away! . . . Forty-two wasn't old. And all those years of frugality? . . . they were an imposed condition . . . not the natural expression of herself. She only needed her opportunity to bloom. . . . She simply only needed the opportunity. . . .

IV

LONDON to Faithful was at once a disappointment and not a disappointment. Constructive as well as destructive . . . just as all great forces were. Like fire . . . or water . . . or passion. . . .

She discovered the charm of Kensington Gardens during her first visit. It was bliss to Faithful to sit beneath the trees and to blink at the sky, for the unaccustomed relaxation was a sweet . . . a terribly sweet . . . sin.

Then . . . just as the days emerged in her mind from a clam reposefulness to something empty which seemed to want vivifying, she received a letter, with the Manchester postmark, from Mrs. Burton. Mrs. Burton wrote:

"DEAR MISS THOMSON:

"I remembered, you see, that you are staying at the Consort, and I am writing to know if you would care to come to a party with me and Jack? We shall be in town on Thursday, and when we are in town we always have a mild celebration. So we are going to the *Alsation* for dinner, and afterwards we shall dance. There will be several connections there of ours, and a few friends. Do let me know. Thursday at seven-thirty.

"Yours sincerely,
"MABEL BURTON."

And Faithful sat down and wrote that she would be very pleased to accept Mrs. Burton's kind invitation. . . .

And now a growing excitement and an unwise anticipation. And Faithful bought herself a new dress.

She purchased it in Oxford Street at one of the very big shops. Bond Street, Hanover Square, and their frivolous sister streets, were words from a strange language to her. And she chose a frock which warmed the blood which Hiram O'Connor had chilled. She chose shoes, too, with a three-quarter heel.

"And stockings, madam?"

"Yes . . . stockings."

"Silk?"

"I . . . haven't you got a sort of mixture?"

Finally she chose stockings with silk

ankles and lisle tops . . . a compromise to her old and new self.

On the day of the party she spoke to the manageress of the Consort. She said: "Do you know if hairdressers call at hotels?"

The manageress smiled. "Of course, Miss Thomson. What did you want one for?"

Faithful flushed. She answered: "I thought a little wave . . . a very slight one, you know."

"Oh, yes! They'll call for that. For anything. Shall I call one up for you? I think they charge the same and perhaps I'd better mention whether you've got one of those stove things that you light with spirits, or not. Perhaps you have?"

"No . . . no. He'd better bring one."

"Yes. You'll tell him to be careful, won't you?"

So Faithful's hair was waved. And she dressed for the party in the new dress; the new shoes and stockings; and a little *eau de Cologne* on her handkerchief with its edging of pillow-lace. And her heart beneath her decorous underlinen thumped and thumped.

She said to the clerk of the bureau at the Consort as she passed through the lounge: "Do you close early or late?"

"We're open all night, Miss."

"Oh, you are? . . . Good! I expect to be very late . . . perhaps two or three o'clock. But if you're open that will be all right, won't it?"

"Quite all right, Miss. . . ."

And so to her first real party.

V

SHE was amazed at the vastness of the chandeliers above her head; amazed at the brilliance of their reflection in the polished floor; amazed at the music and the frocks of other women.

Mabel Burton greeted her. She said: "I do hope you're going to like it, Miss Thomson. As soon as I knew we were coming to town I said to Jack: 'There's that nice Miss Thomson. I would love

her to come with us to a real party!" Mrs. Burton beamed.

"That was very kind of you, Mrs. Burton."

"Oh, dear, no! . . . So long as you enjoy it."

The party accumulated in the lounge and presently moved into the dining-room. Everybody seemed to know everybody else and everyone seemed to be glad; and with considerable courage Faithful faced the full force of more introductions than she had ever braved on one occasion in all her previous life. And when they were over she retreated shyly into her shell.

Dinner, too, was a little terrifying, with its game in aspic and its fish on large scallop shells, and soon dancing commenced in the centre of the floor.

"Do you dance?" . . . Mrs. Burton's flushed face leaned toward Faithful.

"No."

"No? . . . Well, never mind, we'll talk and watch the young ones."

There seemed to be a lot of young ones. They wound their way past the tables with a deliciously immature self-possession; and soon the older ones, too, rose from the table with heavy jokes. Mrs. Burton's father and Faithful were the only remaining ones.

Each time one of her party whirled past her Faithful looked up and smiled. And her smile said: "Don't mind me . . . I love watching." But soon its gaiety lost a little of its spontaneity. And at the finish of the dance Mrs. Burton came and sat beside her.

"And what have you decided to do about the future?" she asked.

"Nothing . . . yet."

"Oh, dear. Having such a good time?"

"It's not that. As a matter of fact, I'm beginning to miss my work."

"Oh, well . . ." Mrs. Burton turned her head as the music recommenced and her brother tugged at her arm. "The habits of a life-time . . ."

"Ye—es."

Again Faithful and Mrs. Burton's

father were the only occupants of the table. Again Faithful smiled that too-cheerful smile which said: "I'm *loving* this!" But her thoughts were busy.

". . . The habit of a lifetime?" . . . Work! . . . So was work to be the justification of her existence? . . . The be-all and end-all? And all that disquiet in those hot nights of her youth? . . . Were they just a caprice, bearing no relation to real life?

"Withering without blooming . . . Withering without blooming . . ."

The old fear was upon Faithful now and a terrible sensation of failure. When Mrs. Burton returned to the table she said:

"I didn't tell you but I've got to be going early."

"Oh! . . . Why?"

"I . . . I've got such a lot of business to see to tomorrow. I must start in real earnest."

"But . . . aren't you going abroad?"

Faithful forced a smile. "No . . . not now."

"Well . . . I hate you going early like this. But we'll meet again, won't we? . . . You've got our address?"

"Yes. Yes, of course. Good-bye and thank you."

And Faithful went.

In the taxi as she was driven home the oblong mirror showed her her waved hair. And something stung her eyes suddenly.

Her handkerchief with its unaccustomed *eau de Cologne* added to her misery and humiliation. In silence, for a few seconds, her upright shoulders rose and fell as she cried quietly.

In the vestibule the clerk said, as he handed her her key:

"Why, you are early, Miss Thomson. It's only ten."

"Is that all?" Faithful spoke calmly now.

The lift whizzed her to her floor and slowly she walked along toward her room. Mechanically she fitted the key into the lock and entered.

She switched on the lights and undressed. With lingering fingers she

hung her new dress upon its hanger beside the one she had worn on the boat. And she peeled off her silk stockings with the lisle tops and rolled them into a ball and placed them in the tray of her cabin trunk beside the other pairs.

"The habit of a lifetime. . . . The habit of a lifetime. . . ."

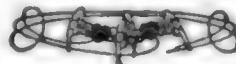
In bed, in the darkness, her mood of spiritless acceptance still continued, while the distant hum of traffic upon the quiet of her room at once isolated her from the world and yet drew her into its fierce combat. And then . . . two men passed in the corridor outside her door and the voice of one of them resembled the voice of Carl.

And all the disquiet returned . . .

and with it, hopes of strange enchantments waiting only for the morrow to happen. And she felt then, that she was still young. No need to give her soul . . . her life . . . to feel again that inexpressible longing with all its poignant sweetness; it was hers.

And suddenly a truth came to her. She said: "Faithful! Faithful Thomson! . . . You've a most wonderful gift. You've hope and the gift of reading into the facts of life a beautiful and mysterious poetry. It's the greatest gift life can give . . . and it's yours. So tomorrow you'll go to Capri. You only need your opportunity . . . You simply only need your opportunity . . ."

She fell asleep smiling.



The Coward

By Harold Lewis Cook

LET my heart be defiant as the sea
Who moves so fearless in his certain home,
Who cares not whence have come nor whither go
Those ships that conquer all his wind and foam.

For I am afraid of love, even love passing,
Though he pass on and never turn his eyes.
I am afraid of love and his sweet, murderous
Gifts that lie beyond the heart's surmise.

I must have courage as the sea has courage
To lift my eyes and see only the sky—
But ah, if I am ever caught in starlight
With your beauty—a coward shall I die!



IF a man agrees with a woman she thinks he is a fool, and if he doesn't she considers him stubborn.



On an Insoluble Solution

By Stuyvesant Barker

I

A MAN is most disappointed in a woman by the shoddiness of her suitors. But then, the suitors of the woman one loves are invariably shoddy.

II

What fellow has ever fallen for the girl that someone else has selected for him?

III

In the process of the conquest of a woman, a man at the beginning, will seek to charm, to fascinate, to delight her. Toward the end, he may grow lax in his attentions, and indeed, may abandon them altogether. However, it is usually too late. He has already gone too far. She is his no matter what he may do.

IV

Men remember their thoughts, women their feelings. That is why a woman never really forgives.

V

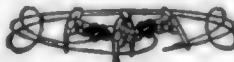
Perfect companions: a woman with a sense of the real and a man with a sense of the ridiculous.

VI

All that a man should demand of any woman mentally is not an expression of ideas, but merely a diverting answer to his own expression of ideas.

VII

I can heartily sympathize with him who severs relations with his girl because of the perpetual difficulty encountered in reaching her on the telephone.



Mood

By H. Thompson Rich

I CANNOT kiss you now:
Unloose your hair,
And let it fall like night.

This moment you are heaven,
All infinite,—
Give me your mysteries!

The Backslider

By Fairfax Downey

A DIM bulb burned in the corner of the sumptuous sitting-room, as the entering cracksman swung a leg over the window sill. He saw a dim figure bent tensely at work on a dull black metal surface. Some bloke had beat him to it. Another was pulling the job.

Say, that guy was profesh all right—not the crude kind that blows a safe with soup. The second arrival decided to wait and admiringly watch the other lift the swag.

How deftly the geek twirled the knobs. How intently he listened, stethoscope clamped to his ears, for the faint click of the plungers. The secret of the combination soon would be his.

Then the worker did a strange, a characteristic thing. He sandpapered his fingers to improve the delicacy of his touch on the knobs.

"Alias Jiminy Valentine!" gasped the watching crook. "Backslid and crackin' a safe agin!"

At that moment, Alias Jimmy Valentine—for it was indeed he—rose from his task, an expression of supreme triumph on his finely chiseled features.

"I've got it!" he shouted, flinging off his headpiece.

"You got de coin, pard?" inquired the cracksman, deferentially.

"No, I got Des Moines!" cried Alias Jimmy Valentine. And turning his back he again applied himself to his radio.



An Unessential Ingredient

By John Wellman

SHÉ stood in the corner of the breakfast room, clad in a clinging negligée and picking innumerable daisies to pieces while she muttered softly: "He loves me; he loves me not."

Her husband entered and frowned. Not that he took the slightest interest in her amours. What he objected to were daisy petals floating around everywhere, especially in his morning cocktail.



WICKED women are tiresome; good women are more tiresome; most tiresome of all are those who seem unable to make up their minds.

Red Velvet

By Beth Brown

THERE was a tall and a short house on that strange street, side by side, like a big brother and a little brother holding hands together. The tall house was always full of light and music. Noisy men and women swayed past each other on the steps. The short house had nobody in it but a very old woman with no teeth and a young girl as delicate as a crystal goblet.

"Never look up when you go by next door!" the old woman would warn. And the girl never looked up with her eyes, because she knew that the old woman was watching, but often at night, she would cling warm and naked to the cold wall of her bedroom and listen with her whole body to the shuffle, shuffle of feet, the broken notes of song, and the opening and closing of the mysterious iron gate below.

Sometimes, at midnight, the door of the short house would creak open, and the girl, in her narrow bed, could feel a little wind come up the steep stairs. Whenever that happened, she would shiver a little and remain awake until dawn, for at that time the door would creak shut and remain shut to the world. Once, she had wondered about it, but now she knew that it was the old woman going out and coming in, dressed in red velvet with two red stains on her cheeks and a dull gold purse over her arm.

In the morning, the old woman shuffled about in slippers and wrapper, getting breakfast ready. Her eyes held no hint of the night before.

"Come and eat, Glory!" she would call out, and placed a fine damask napkin at one end of the table and a coarse cotton one at the other.

The old woman always gave the girl the best of everything and never permitted her to work about the house. Once a week a music teacher came and a professor of languages, but otherwise the place was deathly silent with secrets in every corner and a yellow cat who never purred nor wanted to be petted. The old woman was silent, the tradespeople were silent, and the girl learned to be silent too.

In her own rooms upstairs, she spent her days quietly enough, sewing, reading, playing the piano softly and waiting for the night to come. At night, behind the thin curtains, she could watch the sly gray shadows grow black in the yellow lamplight below, whirl round and round in thin trickles of heads and legs, linger, then capitulate into that strange place.

Once, the voice of a violin came reedy clear through the thin wall of her bedroom, and Glory found herself dancing and dropping her clothes in little stepping stones upon the floor. The old woman caught and beat her for it, with sharp skinny fingers that left welts.

"If I catch you again," she threatened, and left the unfinished words hanging there, like a clothespin come unfastened.

Sunday mornings they went to church, the old woman holding Glory's elbow tightly, even in the church. Men looked at Glory and

thought things. Glory looked at men and thought things, especially of the young minister who preached his sermon into her eyes. The old woman always left five dollars in the collection box and hurried her away. And knowing this, the young minister would lengthen his sermon, for under the sing-song, he could think things about Glory and follow the shape of her lips, up and down, round and round the bow of them.

* * *

A day, a drunken man came to the door of the short house. The old woman answered the bell and sent him away, but not before he had caught a glimpse of Glory. His eyes grew big and round and came over the shoulders of the old woman like a moon climbing out of clouds.

"What are you holding out on me, Mother?" he cried and went for Glory. Glory knew that face, and yet she had never seen it before. Then it was out, down, like wheat being cut. The old woman had leaped and brought him to the floor.

"You've your hundred, Boome!" she yelled. "I want my one!"

"But we're pardners in everything—" he retorted and choked into silence under the sharp, skinny fingers at his throat.

Glory stood up straight with her face to the wall and her eyes shut tight. After he had gone, the old woman came to her side.

"You have seen and heard nothing! Go to your room!"

And Glory went upstairs to play softly, with one finger, a little love song that she found on the cover page of a dull sonatina.

Somehow Glory had learned that the old woman was her grandmother and that years before her mother had slipped out of the short house and into the tall one, and never come back again. Perhaps that was why Glory was not allowed to pass it alone, for fear of what?

One thing she could not solve, and

that was the old woman's comings and goings, with a thin, flat purse at the midnight hour and a full, round one at the dawn.

And yet, in all that forest of silence, Glory knowing no other soul, yearned to lean upon the brown hag, dried and cold though she was. There were times when the faded eyes stumbled pitifully upon her own and Glory wanted to fling herself down into the narrow lap and fondle and be fondled. Upstairs was a cold wax doll whose paint she had kissed away and whose clothes she had crushed with her hands, but the doll was too stupid to return passion like this, and the old woman might kill her. In that house, no love. White, pure, trembling, burning, it was to be so.

Then, at twenty, man eyes found her and loved her, and she reached out with her own, beneath lashes that screened yet looked over and into forbidden gardens. The minister's eyes were the warmest, and when he preached the sermon of Rebecca, it was Glory he moulded into his words.

All the days were like dead fish thrown back into the sea, but on Sundays, white, swift sails carried Glory off into the soft silence of the church. Yet even up there, flashing from the platform, were the minister's two eyes, beaconlights, saying danger, danger, man ahead!

Nothing ever happened with the cold, tight clutch of the old woman always at her elbow, but today, he was stirred with the subject of gambling, and the clutch slackened a little. In the pews was a nervous rustle of holiday best, and now and then a hymn book slipping out of fingers.

"Gambling!" he shouted— "the devils and their wives are at it—"

Heads bobbed up and down, every one agreeing. The rustle of silk grew a little louder, like a new wind coming up at sea. Yes, yes, said their faces. People, Glory thought, in churches, always agreed—only—

It was over. He was standing

there, pale, a man for a woman to want. Three or four people made a circle around him, but the old woman was not one of these. Glory felt the stiff body beside her tremble. Ten dollars in the till, and they started off, more hurriedly than usual.

Down the aisle the stiffness gave way altogether, and Glory found her arms full of crackling yellow skin. The minister knelt down beside her, but no life came back for endless moments, precious because they belonged to the two. Across the hump of black silk, he could look at Glory and find new wonder in her, and in the lips that were a crimson crayon on her face.

"Where?" he whispered.

"Do you know the tall house and the short one on the strange street—?" she began, and never told him which it was, for just then, the old woman revived and brought the silence with her.

* * *

No churchgoing, the Sunday after, and none the week following. The old woman's eyes were strange and glazed and watched over the girl from morning until morning. No more going out at midnight, but instead, a restless, undecided pacing of bare feet back and forth on the floor below, the opening of the door and the little wind coming in, but nothing, nobody going out. Glory knew. The minister was to be thanked at last.

Then, suddenly, as if the feet decided they could no longer be rooted into place, a twelve o'clock when the door shut angrily, and Glory, peering down, saw the red velvet vanish. Life was like that, north wind one day, south wind the next.

Louder and louder came the music through the thin gray of plaster. It blew her thoughts about like thistle in a strong wind. For the first time, Glory heard the tinkle of money fall. Its sound was like no other. The moon rose and sat on the window-sill and looked in at the white girl in the

white gown, sheer and full of rounded shadows at throat and thigh.

Waiting stopped. A knock. The short house echoed it. Up the stairs came the wind and a man now calling, now mounting them two at a time.

She rose and stood with her face to the wall and her eyes shut.

"The old one said you were to come with me—next door!" and Glory felt a man hand come over her shoulder and find her arm.

And so, out of the darkness into the light, Glory found herself in a room full of black and white faces and outlines of bodies veiled in waves of smoke that came from puffing cigarettes, men and women mouths alike blowing it out.

The old woman was the only splotch of red in the place, around that table, with its mad eyes and its stone faces. Women and men were one—twitch, twitch went their hungry fingers, caressing the money piles and the little shiny chips. Only the cards were pink and blue and yellow like innocent picture puzzles that little children might like.

"Glory! Glory!" the old woman called out, in a new strange voice no longer stiff nor silent. The stone faces looked at the girl and melted. Even the women, such women, wanted the feel of that perfect skin. The men stared, but Boome, sixty, gray where the hair at his temples had been burnt by life, stared longest, hardest, most desirous.

"A little kiss to bring me luck!" he cried and leaned forward. The other men jumped and held him.

"To the winner—only—" they said hoarsely. "To the winner—only—" echoed the dry, parched voice of the old woman.

Glory, waiting all these years, wanting that music, had it now in her hands. All discord. Who was in that little room behind that deceitful wall? Not she. No longer. Boome had eyes like her own, like her own, the lashes drooped birdlike and lifted coquettishly at the corners. But his

lips were thick and rough, and would leave red paths upon her skin. The minister had thin, delicate lips sure to find their way carefully.

Boome brought a table and a tall gold chair with velvet tassels and carried her into it and lifted it up until she was the queen sitter with mad subjects everywhere at her feet, and her head in a wreath of warm smoky blue clouds. Then they forgot her.

The old woman was playing. There was no age in those swift hands, in those hot, gleaming eyes. "If I lose the first game, then she shall dance!" was all she promised.

"Seven games. Seven games!" said Boome dully. "I shall win the seventh!" Nobody but Glory heard him, for she had been ordered and had begun to dance, round and round upon that shiny, square table that was room for ten steps and no more. Her soft, bare feet came down in little melodies made to sing for men.

The old woman lost the third game, the fourth, the fifth, and Glory had to give up first her coat, then the comb in her hair, then all but her night-dress. Somewhere she had disrobed before, and it had never left her cold, but now, there were too many, and one, never many, makes for shame.

The seventh game was lost. "Glory! My Glory!" the old woman was wailing, and under the passion in her eyes for gambling, were true tears.

Boome lifted Glory up out of the chair and held her high.

"Old woman!" he said, "you've lost the house and the girl and I've won both. But I'll marry the girl and put her in your place!"

"Yes, yes," the old woman answered wildly. "You marry her—not—" and she began to froth at the lips, and lost her speech altogether.

"Unless—" and Boome looked around shiftily—"someone else will risk his all for her—!" No one stirred to the challenge. "Go for the minister, Jaques," he called to the hall-boy,

and contemplated the girl casually, his hands in his pockets, but his eyes warm.

The girl wavered and smiled, and Boome said: "Well?"

"My own choice for my own marriage, yes?" she begged. He nodded his head with a careless yes. So Jaques went where Glory bid him.

"Who'll play?" Boome called again. The old woman shivered and slumped into her seat. She was in darkness, wordless, unconscious.

A thin man, white as a seagull, rose and fell. A round man, red as a peony, bloomed up and withered before Boome's stroke of luck. Women scrambled and fought, but Glory was still his at dawn.

Jaques came back. "The minister is out," he told Glory, "nobody knows where." The girl heard him and looked away. Boome heard too, and laughed. "I need not marry—" he said, throwing back his head. "Fact is, I've a wife already!"

The old woman, dead to life, shivered and stirred a little. Low moans came out of her throat, though Glory, watching, knew them for words.

Downstairs, the door opened, heavier than it had ever sounded before. A wind came up the steps and brought him with it. His hair was rumpled as if with night-wandering, and the stick in his hand muddy from poking around in black corners. He wore the garb of a minister, but his eyes were the eyes of a man. Then he caught sight of Glory in the sheer dress, grown even sheerer with dawn, and became minister again—scornful, two thin lines for lips. Glory turned pitifully away from him. The old woman, still moaning, brought a coat for her shoulders, a comb for her hair. Glory bent down and kissed her, the first kiss in a century of twenty years. Both women were ashamed. The old woman was trying to speak and only succeeded in making odd sounds which nobody could understand, not even Glory.

"Perhaps the stranger will play?"

Boome sang at the top of his voice, and came forward. "Look!" and he pointed toward Glory.

The minister did not look but walked steadily toward the table and sat down quietly. He fingered his cards as if he had played a long life-time.

* * *

Dawn came and grew into daylight and afternoon waned into evening, and dusk fled before midnight, and still the two played and Glory sat in the gold chair, with the hand of the old woman in hers.

One by one the shadows around the table left empty places like missing teeth in a hag's mouth, square white against the silver wall-paper. Sunday came and went, and made three days of gambling. Something the old woman wanted to say but could not—beating at her breast to bring her voice back before that mad game came to an end.

Dawn of the fourth day, and Boome again won his Glory.

"Now who can say that she is not rightfully mine?" he cried out—leering into the faces of the small, spent group around him. The minister's hands were cold and white and long, and reached across the table, nearly touching Glory, nearly. The closed eyelids on the girl's face were two pale pink seashells, transparent, and to be covered with kisses. Not he, but Boome, would be kissing them.

"Old woman, do you hear, the girl is mine!" Boome was shouting, and

he shook the old woman with his great, red hands.

The old woman staggered, then straightened. "Stop shaking me!" she panted, and laughed shrilly, happy to have found her voice again. The burden of eighty years were upon her shoulders, but the devilment of a debutante was in her face.

"Of course, Glory is yours!" and she brought the girl forward by the hand. "Who else can your daughter be—but yours?"

Boome stared. His lips parted company, and made a black "O" upon his face. "By Gad! The one thing to my credit!" he cried, and looked admiringly at Glory. The girl grew shy under his eyes, but became bold when she found them kind and strong. Boome came forward, caught one leg of the gambling table apurpose, and watched the cards rush down in swift rivers upon the floor. "By Gad!" he cried again and again.

The minister was at the door, his hat in his hand, half of him over the threshold.

"You've won me—" laughed Glory, into the face of her father, "only to lose me!" and she slipped out of the chair, to stand up, slim and white beside the minister.

Downstairs, a strong wind, a very strong wind, blew the door open, and when it closed again, there was nobody in the tall house, no men nor women nor music, only darkness.

But in the short house, on that strange street, every window gleamed brightly.



WHEN a woman is safely married she can afford to take chances. Moreover, she usually does.



MOURNERS—the people who weren't mentioned in the will.



A Narrow Escape

By John Torcross

"If you'll just raise the chin a bit and turn the head a trifle to the left, I think we'll do better." And Lefferts applied the brush to the canvas with bold, downward strokes. It was in his studio, on the sixth floor of the Ilesborough Apartments, where, on a raised platform at one end of the room, the little model was posing.

She was a pretty little model, all pink and white, with a wealth of auburn curls that fell over a pair of daintily chiseled shoulders, while long, graceful lines, not too rounded, set off a youthful figure partially draped with a filmy greenish material. She was just seventeen, and had been posing for only four months.

"Ah! That's better," murmured the painter with a nod. "That brings out the curve I am trying to get. The line is perfect."

The picture was for the forthcoming exhibition at the Halstadt Galleries, and for months Lefferts had directed his energies to the completion of it; only a few more touches would be necessary. Through the wide French window streamed the warm afternoon sunlight and flooded the room with its golden glitter. The spangled Moorish hangings seemed to dance along the walls, and the bronze Apollo on the onyx-topped table fairly glowed with plastic splendor. Soon the shadows cast by the various bits of bric-a-brac began to lengthen and the heat of the sun grew less. With every stroke the painting took on an added feeling of depth, of value, of reality. Unquestionably it was his finest piece of work: another sitting and all would be finished.

Lefferts drew back a pace and, cocking his head to one side, surveyed it searchingly. He was highly satisfied with the result. Then, of a sudden, his nostrils quivered, and a look of the most alarming horror overspread his face. Tremblingly, he turned and gazed in the direction of the door. Thin driblets of smoke were issuing from beneath it.

II

"FIRE!" The cry rang throughout the building, and the blood stopped circulating in the painter's veins. Since a small child, when he had witnessed the burning of the State Penitentiary, he had feared fire as nothing else on earth. It had been the most dreaded event of his life and, years after, he would dream of it at nights and awaken shrieking, in a cold sweat. He could think only of escape; he must reach the street at once. Nothing else in the world mattered. He forgot all about the picture. And he forgot all about the girl.

"Fire!"

He must fly. The thought obliterated all else. There was no time to lose; every second counted. In a heap, near the window, lay the little model who had completely crumpled.

The air was getting thicker and thicker and, with a bound, he reached the door and flung it open. A gust of hot, stifling smoke poured in that almost bowled him over, while dim, misty figures raced down the hall. He pressed a handkerchief to his mouth and staggered toward the stairs. Groping his way step by step, he lurched to the floor be-

low. The smoke blinded him; he coughed and spluttered; then he reached a window, and drank in a few breaths. But moments were precious; there was no time for delay and, fumblingly, he fought his way to the next floor. It was desperate, this battle against the smoke, but, the vision of the flames spurred him on. He swore he would not be burned alive and, stumbling at every step, he plunged onward.

Frequently he fell, or was crushed into a corner by wedges of other human beings bent upon escape. His eyes burned and there was a ringing in his ears. Two more flights and all would be well. He hurled himself headlong into the frenzied, frightened mob, and literally clawed his way to the bottom of the stairs. Arriving at the ground floor, he tottered through a narrow doorway and reeled into the street.

III

It was good to breathe in the fresh air again and, making his way around the outskirts of the crowd, he, at length, reached the opposite side of the street, where he sank exhausted upon the curb. Nearby a hook and ladder had drawn up, and its crew were engaged in unloading the various accessories. People shouted and ran in all directions: here and there a woman fainted. Ropes had been stretched, and traffic policemen were forcing back the yelping crowds that pressed eagerly forward. Lefferts shook himself, slowly raising his head.

He was safe, unharmed, not even singed. The danger was past and he had come through unscathed. Then he began to reflect. What of the little model he had left in the studio? He shuddered at the speculation. Why had he made no effort to save her? Why had he run off in such an inhuman manner? Indeed, he had not given her an instant's thought; it was only himself he had considered. But the effect of fire upon him had invariably been like that. He could think of nothing but his own preservation.

To go back would have been out of the question. The thing was obviously impossible. Clearly, there was nothing he could do: all opportunity of help had passed long ago. Still, he mused, she might be rescued by someone else. Rescued? The word struck a sensitive chord within him. And again he reflected.

If she were rescued, would he not find himself in a most damnable position? On the face of it his behavior had been fiendish. There was nothing he might possibly say that would forgive it. "Model Abandoned to Her Fate While Artist Flees" he visualized in huge headlines, and a spell of dizziness overcame him. It meant his ruin. He would have to leave the country. He would be ostracized for the rest of his life. And despairingly he gazed on the scene of the disaster. High into the air shot thick columns of water, and scores of firemen began to scale the iron ladders that were hoisted along the walls of the building. Hatchets crashed through crumbling woodwork and avenues of escape were opened upon all sides. It began to look as if the fire were, at last, under control, and cringingly, Lefferts shrank into the shadow of the house opposite.

Doubtless, he pondered, the wise course would have been to take flight immediately: a quick getaway would certainly save a lot of unpleasantness. But the fire held him spellbound. He was wholly unable to leave. Another engine arrived, snorting and blowing great sparks, and there was more attaching of hoses to hydrants. Nets were held and ropes hurled to the windows. At regular intervals ambulances drew up, and first aid was rendered on the spot. The painter shivered and gazed up at the room where he knew the unfortunate girl to be.

In a comparatively short space of time the efforts of the rescuers had left marked results. The smoke had largely abated, and in orderly fashion scores were being assisted to the street, on stretchers.

IV

As he looked, Lesserts observed a ladder rise slowly to the floor of his studio, and two firemen began scaling it. They were going to enter through the window! In a few seconds all would be over. Henceforward he was a marked man. Rung by rung they approached the aperture and he groaned aloud. The agony of it was more than he could bear. His name would become a thing of loathing, of the utterest contempt. And he pictured himself hiding from his fellow beings in strange, unfrequented lands for the remainder of

his days. Then, without the slightest warning, a jagged dart of flame shot forth from the studio window. There was a roaring sound, a crash, and the entire section of the structure collapsed.

With one stroke all evidence had been blotted out. No longer was there anything to fear. There could be no accusation, and he trembled with a sense of the mightiest relief. Contentedly he sighed: he was happy. Life was ahead, and great things were in store for him. He had been caught in a terrible fire and had fought his way to safety. It had certainly been a very narrow escape.



Of Course I Killed Her

By George Briggs

Of course I killed her. . .

"When you smile," she said, "I think of Ralph. He smiled just like you do." I drew down my eyebrows.
"You frown exactly like Howard did," she told me, laughing.
I forced the frown away.
"That blank expression on your face," she remarked, "recalls Alfred, a moron, but rather thrilling."

I rose and strode up to her. Not yet had the thought of murder entered my mind. Her shoulder was white, cool, fragrant.

"When you touch me," she whispered, "there comes a comfortable drowsiness, as when Norman——"

I crushed the words upon her lips with my mouth. A moment afterward, or perhaps it was longer, I gave her a chance to speak.

"When you kiss me——" She paused thoughtfully.

I waited, willing to forgive everything.

"When you kiss me I remember Fred, Jack, Tom, Harry, Bill, Sam,"—she drew a long breath—"Jacques, Ludwig, Isidore——"

Of course I killed her.



LOVE is a disease that is cured by marriage, which is a disease that is cured by divorce, which is a disease that is cured by death.



The Date

By André Saville

SPRAGUE had arrived early—eight minutes early, to be exact—and, lighting a cigarette, he dropped into one of the large, green armchairs that embellished the hotel lobby. He had hoped she would be on time, as he ought to be home by seven o'clock to dress for the Franklewaite dinner, and there was nothing he detested quite so much as dressing in a hurry. As soon as she arrived, he would take her, he thought, to the Grill Room, where they could dance. He knew she liked dancing.

The strain of a lazy fox-trot floated to his ears, and he visualized himself clasping her in his arms while they pirouetted about the room. They danced extremely well together.

Turkish cigarettes were pleasant for a change, he reflected, and he began to wonder if there were Turkish cigars, as well. And if so, what were they like? Who was it that had told him about those new porcelain humidors manufactured in Sweden? He had never been to Sweden, and he wondered if he would like it. He really knew very little about the country. Indeed, the only Swedes he had ever met was that fellow they called "Sven" on Joe Gorkenwick's yacht. And he tried to picture what he would do, if he owned a yacht of his own.

To begin with, he would take a cruise around the world, and have the most interesting experiences in all types of odd, out-of-the-way ports. He would visit Bangkok and Calcutta, and he would explore the Dalmatian coast. He would learn Chinese, and go off on trips into Manchuria, and study the

habits of the Mongolians. Since a small boy, he had longed to view the Sphinx, and, for weeks, perhaps, he would drift in a dahabeah on the Nile.

Corfu, Formosa, Crete and the islands of the East Indies opened up infinite possibilities, and he glowed at the notion. He would see them all, and return lean and bronzed and wrinkled.

Five o'clock struck, but no Grace Tremingway appeared. Oh, well! women were never on time. And he studied the pattern of the quaintly figured carpet. He had once heard somewhere that sufficient concentration upon any given pattern would produce insanity, and the thought had thereafter held a peculiar fascination for him. He pictured himself going mad in a room possessing wall-paper, ceiling, hangings and furniture decorated with the same recurring design.

Tick—tick—tick. He lit another cigarette and began speculating upon the number of ticks there were to the life of a clock. Of course, it was largely a question of the quality of the clock, he supposed, as well as the amount of repairs it might undergo. But what an idle speculation it was! Besides, what did it matter, anyway?

Quarter past five brought no results, and he frowned at the reflection that he would have to hurry through his dressing after all. Women were curious beings—the best of them—he decided, and to attempt to analyze them was a fruitless endeavor. The more one fancied one understood them, the less one actually did. They were inexplicable.

He dwelt upon the early Italian

School—upon Andrea del Sarto, Benvenuto Cellini, Lucca della Robbia, Paul Veronese, Domenichino, Dolci, Giotto . . .

How much more charming life would be, he thought, if certain incidents could be operated backwards, as they are sometimes projected on the motion-picture screen. Things would end at the beginning—a far happier solution to so many problems, he reflected. Somewhere he had recently read that there had been over ten thousand divorces in the state of Illinois during the year 1922, and he meditated upon the business of modern matrimony. It was all such a curious arrangement. South Carolina had no divorce law, and a girl of sixteen could be legally married in Maryland without her parents' consent. Did sardines actually come from Sardinia? he queried.

Half past five came and went, and Sprague roused himself from his maudlin dream of making a million dollars out of paper razor blades to discover it was quarter to six! She might have telephoned, he reflected; but, then, women never think of such things.

What had ever become of Dorando, the Marathon runner, who had been disqualified in the Olympic Games of 1908, he puzzled, and his mind turned to the Dartmouth College cheer—"Wah hoo wah! Wah hoo wah! Da-da-da — Dartmouth! Wah hoo wah! T-i-g-e-r!" Cricket had never been really popular in America.

Tomorrow was the seventeenth, and he remembered that he had not heard

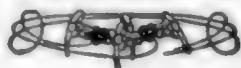
a word from Sam Blotz, who had promised, over a week ago, to let him know about that sugar deal. Could there have been a slip-up, he wondered. Cigarette supplanted cigarette, and the empty minutes loitered by.

Bucephalus, he recalled, was the name of Alexander the Great's horse, and had cost seventeen thousand dollars! It seemed a great deal of money to pay for a horse, especially so long ago, and Sprague ruminated whether Bucephalus were as fast as Zev. Zev's winnings had amounted to over a quarter of a million. He speculated as to what would be the next craze to sweep New York. Within the last few years there had been the Hawaiian, the Spanish, the Egyptian, the Russian, and the Ethiopian. A touch of China, in the shape of Mah-Jong, had appeared, but it was only a touch. He doubted whether there would ever be an Icelandic rage.

Heavens! It was ten minutes past six—one hour and ten minutes after the appointed time. What could have possibly happened? Then, suddenly, it all dawned upon him. He had come to the wrong hotel!

* * * * *

At precisely 6:10 that afternoon, Grace Tremingway gazed at the little, leather-encased clock that garnished the dash-board of Murray Sinclair's eight-cylinder roadster. For the first time she realized that she had completely forgotten about a five o'clock date with Sprague.



WOmen do not dress to make men love them; they dress to make other women hate them.



EVERY man is thoroughly happy at least twice in his life: just after he begins kissing girls, and just after he stops.

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Diamonds Are Trumps

By Pauline Brooks

THROUGH an open window came the cool June breeze of early evening. The living-room, where comfort and luxury blended in fine harmony, was lighted by candles—tall altar candles in high bronze candlesticks, and short thick candles of antique and curious design. Incense was in the air; it rose from a small incense-burner which had once, in centuries gone by, perfumed the austere chamber of some lady of quality in delicately sensuous Japan.

Elsie Raymond sat at the piano playing. It was eight o'clock and she had dined alone. Harry—her husband—was toast-master at an alumni dinner and would not, he had told her, return until early morning. Julia, their daughter of eleven, was with cousins in the country.

Elsie played as she lived—light bits of Chaminade or MacDowell, whose finer meanings she wholly missed. She was an epicure in indulgence of the senses—and emotions. She tasted and nibbled at life as she tasted and nibbled her wine and food. Her preference was for the froth at the edge of the wine-cup, and the sauce which flavors while it decorates. She had known her moments of grosser appetite, and at times a jaded craving for the novel or exotic had lured her into byways of questionable taste and breeding.

Above all else Elsie abjured, with dilettante disfavor, strong emotion of any kind. Anger or irritation would, by some strange and unguessed alchemy, affect the bloom of her skin and bring unwelcome lines about her mouth and eyes. So she was amiable because she

knew that she would be the chief victim of her own ill-humors. She had evolved this philosophy from nothing deeper nor more involved than minute study of her own comfort and convenience. The sweeter emotions of life—love—passion—had ruffled, here and there, the surface of her existence, but had never disturbed the lower depths—if lower depths there were.

Her lovely neck and arms were very white against the old rose of her dinner dress. They gleamed softly against the shadows back of her. Her alert brown eyes roved over the room, as she played, with bird-like questioning. The house was silent but for the gentle melody which awoke faint echoes in the dimly lighted room.

Suddenly came the buzz of an electric bell. Elsie's red, curving lips parted in a satisfied, expectant smile. Jim Dunstan was ushered into the room and behind him the door closed noiselessly.

Jim was tall and rather thin. His dark, clean-cut face expressed quick intelligence and a capacity for self-abandonment. He approached her with a few long strides. As his arms went around her the impetus of his embrace dragged her hands from the keyboard and brought her upward into his arms. Passionately he kissed her while she faintly remonstrated. Then he lowered her gently to the stool and leaned on the piano studying her face. Her hands were lifted to her head and with deft fingers she tightened the loosened hairpins in her hair. It was silky and golden.

"I love to see your hair mussed." Jim spoke with adoring tenderness.

"Funny boy!" She smiled at him, still fussing with her hair. The upward curve of her arm lured his eyes from the soft radiance of her hair.

"You've got the most beautiful arms of any woman I ever knew."

He bent forward and pressed his lips to the little hollow in her elbow. She lowered her arms and put them lightly around his neck. It stirred him to intenser feeling for she was chary of her caresses. Again he lifted her to her feet and held her to him in an esctasy of passion. He could not see her face for it was crushed against his breast. The face expressed merely a vague, pleasurable response to his emotion, modified by a sense of discomfort because his shirt front was harsh against her cheek and because she could not breathe freely.

He released her and gazed adoringly into her delicately flushed face. She smiled—a faint, provocative smile of invitation and mockery. She drew him over to the lounge by the fire where a single huge log was burning to offset the chill of the early June night.

"Why did you insist, sweetheart, on my coming here tonight?"

Languidly she inhaled a cigarette.

"I didn't feel like rushing over to your apartment and watching the time and rushing back home."

"I don't think," he said gently, "that was a good reason for having me come here when you know how I dislike the idea."

She laughed and patted his cheek.

"Perhaps I wanted to be virtuous—or make a virtue of disinclination."

"Disinclination! I don't think I understand."

"Oh, stupid!" she lightly kissed his cheek. He quivered but did not answer her caress. "We've got to be good here, don't you see, whereas—in your apartment—why—"

"Have I ever made love to you against your will?" His voice had an injured ring.

"Of course not," she said petulantly.

"But I want to *talk* tonight, and when we're alone in the evening we never do much talking."

Jim's expression grew serious. "I want to do some talking myself, Elsie."

"What about?" She raised her eyebrows as she gave him a quick glance.

"About you." He smiled at her. "The most important subject on earth."

Without a smile she said accusingly:

"Jim, people are talking about us."

"What of it?"

She frowned and played with a flower on her dress.

"I don't *like* to be talked about."

"Everyone's talked about, more or less. What difference does it make?"

"None—if it happens to be less. But it's more and more and it begins to annoy me."

He stared into the shadows; then he said slowly:

"You care a lot about public opinion."

"Naturally. Don't you?"

"Not one continental damn!" He looked challengingly into her eyes.

"Well, you ought to care for *my* sake." She pouted her lips in reproachful appeal. "And I've an idea that Harry has heard things."

Jim's mouth tightened. "That's the only thing I care a damn about, dear,—Harry."

"Oh, I don't think Harry dreams that—I'm sure he doesn't suspect the truth about—about us."

Jim looked at her sharply. "You misunderstand me, Elsie. I'm not at all concerned about Harry suspecting the truth."

"You're not!" She drew back and stared at him. "What do you mean? You don't suppose I want him to suspect?"

After a short silence he said quietly:

"The spectacle of one man keeping on friendly terms with another man and carrying on an affair with his wife—on the side—isn't exactly edifying."

She waited an instant, then she said slowly:

"Harry doesn't love me any more. Why *shouldn't* I love someone else?"

"That's not the point; it's the dam-

nable deception of it all that's got under my skin. If I thought Harry could suspect and not tell me so straight, and kick me out if I lied about it, I'd despise him. As it is I pity him and I feel like a cad."

"Pity him!" she said scornfully. "I tell you he doesn't *love* me."

"But he *trusts* you, or he's a damn, sneaking—oh, I can't talk about it."

"Well, Jim," she said blandly, "now that you've developed a conscience, what are you going to do about it? Confide in Harry or run off with me in an air ship?"

"I'm not averse to the air ship, but I'd tell Harry we were going."

"You're crazy!" she moved uneasily in his arms.

"Not so crazy as you think." Something in his face startled her.

"What—are you going to do?" she spoke nervously.

"Tell Harry that we love each other, but that of course I'll wait until you can divorce him in some decent way that won't injure either of you."

"There's only *one* way in this State, and that's a long ways from being decent."

"Paris!" Eagerly he presented the alternative. "Harry won't mind the expense. He's generous, he doesn't love you and he's not a dog-in-the-manger."

"As he hasn't been consulted your assumption is rather amusing." She looked steadily at him with a little smile of defiance. "And if you say one word to him without my consent, I'll have nothing more to do with you."

He stared at her for a second. Then he seized her impulsively in his arms.

"I mean it, Jim. I'll never forgive you if you talk to Harry without my consent."

"I can't go on this way," he said sullenly.

"Just what do you mean?" She leaned her head against his shoulder and studied his stern young face.

"We'll have it out with Harry or—or our present relations must cease."

There was a cool ring of determination in his voice.

"You wouldn't have the strength of mind to see me often and not make love to me."

"I wasn't speaking of—just that. And if I couldn't stick it, I'd keep away from you."

"And weaken all the more if you only saw me occasionally." Her teasing smile goaded him.

"Then I'd go where I'd *never* see you—until you made up your mind to leave Harry."

"But, Jim," she said soothingly, "you can't *afford* to marry."

"I've five thousand a year no matter what I do or where I go. I guess we could get along."

"Get along! I'd get old and ugly if I didn't have money for—oh, for lots of things."

"Ugly! And *old* you'll never be. And I don't propose to go on waiting indefinitely. Why shorten the time together?"

He took her in his arms and thought that the sweet yielding of her lips expressed the yielding of her spirit.

At a quarter to twelve she insisted on his going. He rose obediently and took her in his arms.

"Darling," he said tenderly, "I'll give you a day or two, then I'm going to Harry."

Neither of them heard the muffled click of the front door. He stood, holding her close, kissing her and telling her how he loved and needed her. She had decided to drop discussion. Later she would see to it that he did not pay the price of opposing her wishes. Of course she loved him, but why have a scandal, when they could perfectly well go on as before? Of course—if Jim had plenty of money—but under the circumstances. . . . Her goodnight kiss was no less sweet and clinging because of her gentle ruminations.

The heavy rugs in the hallway deadened the sound of approaching feet. Jim was loath to let her out of his arms. The portieres parted noiselessly, but they stood in the corner of

the room furthest from the hall entrance.

"I won't come here again," he said with gentle firmness, "until either we talk to Harry, or simply—go away. I'd prefer the former."

"Let's see," she said doubtfully. "This is Saturday. I'll go to your apartment next Wednesday. Harry's going down to the country with the dogs and some of the servants. I'm going a week from Monday."

"Wednesday! I can't wait that long. I want you—I want you—" His voice trembled with passion and he hid his face against her throat.

Over his shoulder Elsie's glance wandered, then stopped arrested at the doorway. Harry stood just inside the room, very still, with hands in pockets, staring at the couple at the other end of the room. His face expressed an astonishment so complete that every other emotion was swept from it.

Elsie stiffened in Jim's arms. He felt the recoil and quickly raised his head and looked at her. She was staring across the room, her lips parted and in her eyes the look of a trapped bird.

Jim slowly turned and his eyes met Harry's. He relaxed but did not withdraw his arms from around Elsie. He merely stared, too dumfounded for words or action. Harry moved toward them and they drew apart and stood silent waiting for what he might say or do. The violent check to his emotion left Jim rigid and silent. Elsie held her breath, watching her husband's face. His voice cut the stillness. He looked straight at Jim. He had given his wife one quick, comprehending glance.

"So you want—my wife?"

Elsie gave a quick, convulsive gasp. Jim threw back his head and his voice held a challenge and a justification.

"Yes—I want—your wife. I want to marry her. I love her."

Harry turned his head and looked at his wife.

"What have you got to say, Elsie?"

She shrank back, her lips quivering, her voice husky from nervous fright.

"I—I haven't anything to say—I—
I don't—know—" She broke into a sob and ran to the doorway.

Harry remained motionless, but Jim made an impulsive movement toward her, his face working and his hands clenched. As she disappeared he stood still, watching the man whose wife he wanted.

"I'm not ashamed of loving Elsie, but you can shoot me for deceiving you, if you like."

Out of the silence came, at last, Harry's low voice.

"I think I understand. We'll discuss the matter tomorrow."

Jim's face glowed in quick response to the other man's sportsmanlike generosity. Then he lowered his head and walked rapidly from the room. Harry remained motionless until he heard the front door close, then he also left the room.

* * * * *

A half hour later there came a knock at the door of Elsie's dressing room. In answer to her low "come in," her husband entered and quietly asked if he might have a short talk with her. Elsie, in negligee, her long, thick hair loose over her shoulders, was an example of the physical charm and loveliness that a woman can exhibit after a rather stirring midnight encounter. But there was an unaccustomed vertical line between her eyes, and her manner was nervous as she said:

"Yes, sit down please."

He waited for her to seat herself, then he dropped leisurely into an easy chair and took out his cigarette case.

"Do you mind?" He glanced at her, his cigarette held between his lips as he lighted a match.

Elsie was striving for a delicate and prudent blend of injured dignity and gentle tolerance and propitiation, but she merely succeeded in evincing her nervous doubt as to Harry's next move. She waited for him to speak—her wisdom carried her at least that far. At last he said:

"Perhaps, my dear, you'll be truthful and tell me exactly what your de-

sires and intentions are regarding Jim and myself?"

It was not quite what she had expected. She breathed unevenly.

"I—I haven't any intentions." Her head was lowered as she spoke.

He scrutinized her face as he said slowly:

"You haven't any intentions? Well, what would you like to do?"

Again she answered jerkily: "I—I don't want to do anything—anything—different."

Uncomprehending he stared at her. Then his expression hardened.

"You don't want to do anything different? What do you mean by that?"

He did not raise his voice but it held sharp command. Startled, she looked up into his eyes. It came to her that he had misunderstood. Her words stumbled hastily one over the other.

"I mean—that I don't wish to be divorced or go away with Jim, because—I—that is—if you—" she became incoherent.

The habit of years was strong in Harry. He had always indulged her whims whether or not he understood them. For a long time it had not been because he loved her but because he was tolerant of all weakness and inadequacy, especially in women. Also because she was the mother of his child. They had never been given to vulgar bickering, and neither of them had cared enough about the other to invite serious quarreling and bitterness. He never tried to follow the cow-path of a woman's mind, but he understood his wife as no one else did, and he had trusted her until now; not her deeper loyalty but her respect for tradition and her fear of convention and the penalty of disobedience to it. He had gauged her limitations with tolerant acceptance of the inevitable.

Women were not frank—why should they be? He had never known any who were—in the sense he meant—and they usually lacked the courage that goes with candor. He pitied Elsie because she could not meet the present

situation courageously and he felt a generous impulse to help her in her obvious embarrassment. His own wishes were clear. Even if she loved Jim he would prefer to have her preserve the traditions of the unbroken home—but of course, not if she wished to go. Vaguely he felt that no self-respecting man would try to hold his wife against her will. He would make it easy for her if she wanted her freedom. Gently he said:

"Elsie, my dear, do you love Jim Dunstan?"

Startled, she opened her eyes wide and her mouth sagged a little.

"Don't be afraid to tell me," he persisted. "You and I understand each other. I'm fond of you and I guess you like me well enough, but we both know that what we felt once disappeared long ago."

There was not a trace of bitterness nor regret in his summing up. His quiet common sense reassured her and then came a feminine suspicion. She glanced sharply at him.

"Harry, are you in love with some other woman?"

He laughed in frank amusement. The sudden twist of her mind had caught him unawares as usual.

"I don't happen to be. What about it?"

She colored faintly, feeling herself ridiculous in some unaccountable manner.

"Would it be so remarkable if you were?" There was rancor in her voice. "A man who isn't in love with his wife is likely to be crazy about someone else."

He smiled. "Well, you see, I'm not. Not a question of virtue—merely—coincidence."

She resented his light irony.

"There's time yet." She curled her lip at him. "You're just at the dangerous age for a man, you know."

He laughed softly at her cattishness, which he never resented, for it amused him.

"If I should have the good fortune you refer to, I'll let you know. In the

meantime I'm concerned with other things—mainly your happiness."

His unaffected kindness softened her as it always did. She did not love him and she did love Jim—in a way—Her unappeased vanity was never soothed by her husband and passion was dead between them. Jim adored her. Vanity, and such surface passion as she was capable of, were satisfied by him. If only she could keep his love without making any sacrifice! She found no answer for Harry and he tried again.

"Won't you be honest, Elsie? Do you love Jim?"

"I suppose," she said waveringly, "that I care for Jim." She gave her admission grudgingly. "But not as he cares for me."

"No, I daresay not . . . Poor devil!"

She was not clever enough, or was too vain to catch the import of Harry's commiseration for her lover, so she smiled and said sweetly:

"It's better when it's that way."

"Better! For whom?" he asked sharply.

"Why—why, for the woman of course."

"Ah, yes, I daresay it is, if that's all she wants—just to be loved." He looked searchingly at her. "It struck me he's pretty hard hit. You've let it go on. You owe him some consideration, don't you?"

"His idea," she said tartly, "of what I owe him, is that I must marry him."

"Well—is that *your* idea?"

Again she hesitated, then spoke with sudden vehemence.

"If you don't wish to get rid of me—if you want to avoid scandal and all the rest of it, I may say that I wish to remain here—with you."

His man's philosophy did not quite cover the situation.

"You mean—that you *love* Jim, but that you want to live with *me*?" All side issues he swept brutally out of the picture.

She drew herself up indignantly. "There are other things to consider. I owe something to Julia, don't I?"

"Oh, Julia!" He had to readjust his mind to her play of argument.

"Yes—Julia! If I'm willing to stay and bring up my daughter and take care of your home, I suppose you have no objection?"

Her tone was biting.

"No," he said slowly. "I have no objection, but you should have considered all that sooner. It's rough on Dunstan. He's not counting on your putting Julia or me before *him*."

"That's *his* affair."

"I should have said it is largely *your* affair."

He stared abstractedly at his feet.

A short silence, then Elsie said abruptly:

"May I inquire what Jim said to you, Harry?"

He started from his reverie. "Jim! Why—er—he said very little—no more than I did. That he wasn't ashamed of loving you and he offered me the privilege of shooting him because he had betrayed my trust in him."

She started, wide-eyed. "Betrayed! What—did he mean?"

Harry meant nothing more sinister than the betrayal of a man's confidence in another man's friendship, but something in her eyes made him speculate upon a hitherto unguessed possibility.

"I took for granted," he looked steadily at her, "that he meant he felt like a cad for making love to my wife under my roof, and knowing I suspected nothing." Elsie averted her glance and Harry added quietly: "Why—what did you think he meant?"

"I didn't think anything," she said sullenly.

"Elsie!" The cool command of his voice raised her glance to his face. "Was there anything else that he could have meant?"

She looked coldly into his eyes.

"I suppose I know what you mean. Well—I don't happen to be the erotic type, my dear Harry." Evasion was an art with Elsie. Her words carried conviction.

"I wouldn't call a woman erotic for

giving way, once in her lifetime, to genuine passion, if she felt it."

All the accumulated disappointment of his early, frost-bitten passion for her was in his voice and his face. She recoiled as from a blow, but she answered serenely:

"It's a matter of temperament—or taste."

"My God!" He rose abruptly to his feet. "I should call it a matter of heart—of ordinary normal human emotion!"

Of her conventional innocence and fidelity he was fully assured, but his scorn for her standards carried him beyond regard for his personal prerogatives. He took a few restless steps back and forth.

"I'll tell you now, Elsie, once for all, that I'd respect you a damn sight more if you were capable of one honest, warm, disinterested emotion for that poor devil who adores you, than I do for what you call, I suppose, being *virtuous!*"

That any mid-course was possible for her, he did not dream. Without genuine passion for Jim, that she could nevertheless have given herself to him, defying convention and betraying the marriage vow, he could not conceive. Her narrow, withered soul shivered helplessly in the cold, revealing light of his sudden upheaval of honest conviction. She could find no words with which to flay him or defend herself.

Presently he stopped in front of her. He was calm now, with renewed indifference and apathy.

"Very well. You love Jim Dunstan, but—you love other things more. Not me, of course, but your home and your position—and of course Julia! We mustn't forget Julia!"

His irony was like a lash. Then he said:

"By the way, Jim hasn't any money, has he?"

Her start was almost one of guilt.

"No—not much. About five thousand a year, I think."

"Ah—I see. That *would* be shortcomings for you, my dear." He looked down at her with the recovered balance of amused tolerance.

"I—I don't see why you say that," she stammered.

"My dear girl, I understand the drift of your thoughts. You're not desperately in love with Jim. You enjoy his adoration and you'd like to keep it if you could—along with all the rest. But you can't. . . . Upon my word," he added impulsively, "I'd be disposed to settle enough on you so you could marry Jim, but, if I know him, he'd shoot himself before he'd have you that way. So you see—I couldn't very well work it, even with the best intentions in the world."

A moment of silence, then she said:

"Are you—do you intend to have an interview with Jim?"

"We did plan something of the sort." Harry moved slowly to the door, hands in pockets. "But I can't see that there's anything particular for us to say to each other, now that you've made the situation so—so clear—and so *very* simple."

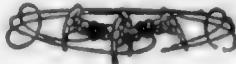
Turning as he reached the door, he added:

"Of course, you'll see him yourself, Elsie, and make things as clear to him as you have to me?"

"I don't know," she faltered. "I—I think—I should prefer—to *write* to him."

"Yes." Harry smiled, his hand on the door knob. "It *would* be easier and pleasanter, no doubt—for you!"

And with that he left her.



NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN THINGS: the first drink, the first kiss, the first husband.



Conclusions

By J. K. Parker

1

INDISCRIMINATE praise is uninteresting. Speak only of the evening gown you actually admire, the hat that really becomes her, the lip rouge that has a pleasant taste.

2

Every woman sincerely believes her present love affair is both her first and her last. Every man knows that it is not his first, and passionately hopes that it will not be his last.

3

It is absurdly easy to gain the inter-

ested attention of a married woman. Simply imply that you would propose to her, if she were single; likewise imply that you intend to act toward her as if she were single.

4

The average man's belief in his wife's trustworthiness is surprisingly great. It is equalled only by the average woman's disbelief in her husband's faithfulness. Both beliefs are surprisingly unfounded upon fact.

5

Monogamist: A married man or woman over ninety.



Stille

By Emanuel Freiherr Bodman

WIR gingen in die laue Silbernacht,
Ich hielt dich fest, der Seewind hob sich sacht.
Um Stadt und Gärten flocht der Mond so breit
Den ersten Kranz der Frühlingsseligkeit.

In Tropfen rann sein Licht von deinem Haar
Ich blickte dir ins Auge, lang und klar,
Und fühlte deine Worte wachsen, blühn
Im mich hinein wie stilles Immergrün.



A WISE woman packs her trunks when her lover starts to think.



Vin Ordinaire

By Halle Schaffner

HE had known him intimately, as intimately,—well as one can know a man. He had been the first, though he would not be the last. Even then, at the time when they cared the most for each other, she had known that. It was not in the nature of things to be fixed and permanent—and besides, he was an artist, a restless man. Each day brought him new magic, a strange gift that burnished the dull spots of life. She smiled, a smile less metallic than usual, as she thought of him, his quaint ideas that rose like joyous bubbles from the surface of his imagination, stirred into being by some sudden, vivid fancy,—to vanish into the thin air of illusion. . . . Was youth after all only a state of mind. . . .

Toot! Toot! whistled the toy boat, as it chugged its way round the blue satin Swiss lake. *Toot! Toot!* it called to the mountains, as though to announce proudly what a charming visitor it had on board, that warm delicious afternoon. In the sunshine up there on the deck, other thoughts floated lazily into her memory.

. . . How delighted he had been, with the shape of things—with the form of a tree—for instance with that great green plume of a tree that drooped its thick fronds over the stone gate at the entrance to the park. The Wishing Tree, he had called it. She could almost catch the scent of its feathery yellow blossoms. How they had loved it. . . . But why think of such things now?

Or again, what a ridiculous child he became, absorbed and rapturous over the cases of jewelry in the

Egyptian Room at the Museum. Lost he seemed, with that dreamy, distant look on his face, before such a display of richness—gold bent into exquisite designs by loving antique hands—as if mysterious dead caresses still clung to the delicate patterns, strung here and there with blobs of hard, bright blue. That ancient blue, so intense that even now, it hurt her; tiny stabs of pure azure. It really was extraordinary how these incidents lasted! Yes, it had all been quite heavenly.

They kept the Museum and the Egyptian treasure for rainy days, when the city loomed smoky and oppressive. No more noise! No more wet, dripping umbrellas! He would insist that bits of the sky had fallen into that room, and that the gold was solid sunlight. Of course it was all theirs by right, for were they not the last of the Pharaohs, in incognito? She had loved it—this pretending game. Funny, it never seemed pretending then—that was the queer thing about it.

On rainy days they would lunch at the Russian Inn, delighted at the vista of a complete afternoon together, when it was too dark for him to paint, and no one had asked her to pose. You could get an excellent meal at the Inn—as they counted meals then—cabbage soup that was perfect, infinite black bread, dots of crisp radishes, generous portions of everything and such quantities of hot tea brought to them by that pretty Poia, who adored romance and lovers,—and who knew they could never have too many glasses of tea. The samovar must have grown over

a spring of fragrant amber that trickled forever through its copper lips. All this feast for almost nothing—for nothing literally, when George had no money and Rosa, who owned the Russian Inn, made them her guests, insisting that George was a great foreign artist, whose work a stupid public did not yet fully appreciate. He traveled a little in front of his fame—she would say. Kind, good, clever Rosa!

Often she came over to their table and bade them share with her some treat or other—salmon that was a strip of pink ribbon on the thick, white plate, or a nest of anchovy salad, and then the three of them would argue violently, all over again, the theories of aesthetics *à la* George. They must see the rhythm that curved in and out of rich solids; the depth of color held in that luscious shadow cast by the salad bowl—oh, they talked it all out—that and how much more.

Then on the days of days, when George sold a landscape, what an occasion they would make of it! What quantities of red wine George would order for everyone—thin, sour *Vin Ordinaire*, that her maid wouldn't touch now. But nectar then, that same *Vin Ordinaire*!

Well, it had to end, that meal, the lively talk. Rosa would look around and discover the tables about them were vacant, the maids beginning the usual clatter of china. They would laugh and sing in Russian as they went in and out, carrying loads of dishes,—fresh young girls, clad in their peasant dresses, with blouses gayly embroidered above their red and blue aprons, the soft tinkle of bright beads, chain upon chain, around their strong, full throats. Poia, Marie, Tatyana—what had become of them? And Rosa?

"So then, *mes enfants*, I leave you now. There is work to do. Until to-morrow," and Rosa's face with its dark animation, its smile that lit a

sudden lovely curve of white, would resume its usual shut look. Away she would fly to the kitchen, a sharp little hawk once more.

They, too, would get up and go out into the rain, on, on, up the Avenue, talking and laughing—so much they had always to say to each other! He would stride along at her side, she had to hasten her steps, while she tried to keep away from the rent in the umbrella, and the trickle that pursued the thin old-fashioned red cape. On past the gigantic shapes that pressed close to them their glossy wet sides of stone, with plate glass eyes that glared at them through the rain, monsters with steel bones—so George claimed solemnly. That was the world she lived in....

She hated rainy days now. The kind of days that put one out of sorts—rain was the ruin of one's hair and disposition. Chiffons, too, even in a motor, it reduced in no time, to a hopeless pulp. Thank heaven, she could afford the best in climates! No more rain! No more old red capes! Florida or California, the Riviera or Algiers, just as she chose; the sea or the mountains—they were hers for the asking. She took them almost for granted, quite as a matter of course.

The Egyptian room—she drew a long breath.... She had jewels of her own nowadays, row upon row, not staring up at her with mocking lights, beyond her touch. They lay obediently in her jewel case, layers of emerald, ruby, and moony translucent fruits. Only blue, she had never cared much for blue since that time. Once she had ordered a set of Egyptian jewelry—duplicates of those very ornaments in the Museum, the same bracelets, necklace and diadem, heavy gold hung with great lumps of turquoise. But she felt a strange reluctance about them, that was almost "morbid" and put them away—it seemed as if they were dead eyes—and instead, only the turquoises, hard stones, were real and

warm and alive. She preferred not to think about it at all.

Toot! Toot! sounded the little boat. Love! Life! It seemed to shriek at her . . . why? When the band is playing its merriest, and when all things move to an even tune, just as she bids them do. The past that winds through it like an insistent minor melody, dim echoes of herself. . . . Well, they had made the most of it while it lasted. . . . But decidedly one must look to the future. — To let one's youth sail by, without a harbor, was folly! It meant to be poor always, to have to return eventually to that dreadful little town, and to turn into a vegetable, with her real, her vibrant self gone to seed. No, indeed; she had had enough of that sort of thing. Enough and more! But why does something stir inside of her at times —something that tears softly at her, never quite caged?

Her husband across the way, smoking, dozing in the mild warm light. She looks at him, at his ruddy face, heavy with indulgent living, at the little pouches beneath his eyes, the bigger pouch beneath his chin. Toto beside her, shuts his expensive, bulgy eyes. She plays with his ears, and yawns lightly, through her thin, fine nostrils. Even the boat seems asleep, so languidly does it move on the blue expanse of that placid lake.

And life was just like this—tranquil, without agitation. No more worries, never again! . . . She remembers the first time she saw her husband, the afternoon when he came to the studio, to take a look at George's work. Rich, a patron of the arts . . . and a bachelor! Amiable—so she smiled at him, just a little half-smile—in her way she too was an artist. And he had come again. . . . Later, after more visits, he bought a painting. She understood . . . he understood. It was very simple. Her dancing bear, George had called him —before she made him see, what he had not seen . . . what he would have to see. "Oh," he said. A little pause.

"Oh, of course," with that queer twisted smile of anguish.

Yet they managed to part amiably, almost extravagantly friends. And he had given her a landscape, his favorite one, for a wedding gift. "*Souvenir artistique*," he said, when he brought it to her—and she had thanked him profusely, without quite looking at his eyes. Her husband, too, had thanked him. . . . In his heavy way he had great sophistication. They had come along now, all this time, easily enough, from the first. Excellently. Afterward, each, for the sake of the other, had been discreet. Tact, that was it, tact.

Chug—Chug—Chug—coughed the little boat as it rounded a curve of the shore, where a wharf, like a thin grey finger, pointed at them, and a cluster of houses, pale washes of sepia, umber, sienna that hid under high shouldered, humped-up roofs, waited for their arrival. What dull lives—she thought to herself. As if beauty, these eternal peaks of snow, were enough! What compensation did people find, here, in such places, she wondered. Or didn't they care? Perhaps they were too stolid . . . and after all, what did it matter!

She had never seen George again. They had lost each other completely, as if they had their own separate planets. Life was like that. But each Spring, when she was in Paris, between engagements, or modistes, appointments that were tiresome yet exciting, she would manage to get to the Salon. Sometimes he had a picture in the exhibition, always landscapes, all pearl and tender greens, as if the dew lay on the paint. Once a portrait—a young woman, very fair, with eyes that shone purple-blue in a face shaped like a heart, and whose hair was the color of Egyptian gold.

Perhaps it was his wife, or likely a sweetheart. Fancy him a husband, bird of passage that he was, with his head in the clouds, his wings beating toward the sun. A husband in love

with rhythms, aesthetics. . . . She shivered daintily.

Toot! Toot! Clang! Breathless the little boat bumped alongside the landing and lay there, panting in the shadow of the faded, quaint town, at the base of the mountains. It rested there, while the mail pouch was shoved off, while crates of faintly squawking fowl and a dead lamb that wobbled absurdly—as if in protest at being tossed thus across sticks—were put aboard. Only a few passengers came on—a curate with two dried out daughters and another family. Then the whistle tooted three shrill salutes to the rosy peaks. Now they were off again, turned toward home.

What a scramble the new family made, clattering up the stairs. Their boots against the brasses sounded a fearful din. Children were a great nuisance, though at that she didn't know much about them, really. So few of her friends had children. You couldn't travel with them—and governesses were a problem. Yet in spite of herself she couldn't very well escape from watching them as they sat near her—a rosy little bunch; three solid small girls, with plump cheeks and stiff dark braids, and a small boy, scrubbed till he shone pinkly-tan, whose blue eyes stared at one gravely, beneath a mop of fair hair.

Presently the mother came up the stairway, carrying an ample basket which looked as if it held the picnic supper, beneath its red and white checked napkin. They waved to her, and she smiled at them. Very pretty she must have been, but the bloom had faded, and there were deep lines under her eyes. Only a heavy twist of vivid gold gleamed amazingly thick, beneath her hat of frilled, rather shabby black. Amused at the children who were wriggling for joy, at the sight of the hamper, she sat down beside them, and lifted the tiny girl on her lap. They really seemed rather nice, for people in modest circum-

stances, she decided—and she supposed children couldn't help being noisy. The little girl was quite an adorable child.

The father was still below attending to tickets or something. She wondered idly, what he would be like. . . . As he came up the stairs the children made a dive for him. "Careful! Careful" the mother called after them, a tired tenderness in her voice. Soon they were dragging him, a tall slightly stooping man, to a place beside them. His face, his face . . . oh, was it . . . was it . . . or wasn't it? Could it be . . . George! . . . only graver, older . . . George with a family group for a background—George, with drooping moustaches—without that look of dreamy rapture?

Toot! Toot! shrieked the little boat. Love! Life!

The thing that usually was quiet—started, suddenly, intolerably, to ache within her. It seemed to beat in every part of her, in her throat, in her wrists, behind her eyes. . . . When she turned around again, the boat was quite near the harbor. . . . They were still there. The father had an arm around the two little girls, who leaned up against him—like a pair of sweet cherries, they were—and the boy, as George—if it were George—must have looked at that age.

They cast longing looks at the basket. "Shall we go downstairs to the saloon and have our supper there?" the mother asked him. "Why not here on deck—just as we are," he replied. "We must not let them miss the sunset," he added, and they smiled deeply at each other.

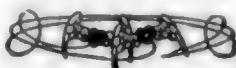
He stoops over, opens the basket, and brings out a flask of milk for the children, bread with slices of veal between, some cheese, and for them, a bottle of thin, acrid red wine—Heavens above, how dreadful—*Vin Ordinaire!* She came to her senses at last. . . . No, no—decidedly no! Never again! Not a regret. . . . She had had quite enough of that cheap *Vin*

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Ordinaire to last her for the rest of her life! But what a pity to have to learn the truth—to see him again, like this. She preferred even not to look at them again! Things were all right,

just as they were. . . . *Vin Ordinaire* . . . what a pathetic sight! So she took up Toto, cuddled him under her arm, and went below to look for her husband.



Vale

By Leonard L. Cline

HAVING so loved you, life, I could not be
Contented only with the sight of you,
Could not companion with you formally
And chat of nothings as the others do.

But I have loved you with a richer love
Requiring more: To know your least conceit,
To thrill with things that you are trembling of,
To have you yielded fully to me, sweet!

O joy of harsh uncompensated toil
And sudden jubilation of success!
Joy of the town's barbaric blare and broil,
Joy of the dusky furtive wilderness!

O wanton joy of song and pagan things
And fervid penitential joy of prayer,
Musk of the frankincense the censer swings
With hint of sandalwood in a girl's black hair!

And having loved you so could I endure
Your frown, sweet lady? Nay, at last I think
I must renounce you, my own sepulture
Myself prepare, distil the draught, and drink.

Where violets my only epitaph
May spell and winds my elegy intone,
Light-hearted with the music of your laugh
I shall lie down exultantly alone.



The Croupier

By John F. Lord

SHÉ had the reputation for being lucky. She was continually finding things. She always won a prize at the church euchres. Whenever she took a chance in a lottery, she won. Her success emboldened her. She had her husband insured for fifty thousand. That was twenty years ago. She is still paying the premiums.

The Billet Doux

By Beatrice Grayson

I WEPT.

* * *

It was dainty, pink and perfumed, with silver edges and a shining monogram.

The writing was undoubtedly feminine.

I found it in the pocket of my husband's dinner coat.

It said: "Fred—I love you—I shall always adore you—Come to me...."

* * *

I wept.

Emerald liqueur invariably made me gushingly sentimental.

I wept because Fred would know I had been squiffy again....

It was I who had written him the billet doux.



There a Little

By Peter Kerrigan

OPTIMIST: the sort of man who marries his sister's best friend.



THE only way to be happy is to live up to your lowest ideals.



LEGENDS: Stories handed down from husband to wife.



IDEAL picture of a reform movement in the United States: a hangman signing a petition against vivisection.



NEVER marry a man who says "kiddies." He will be sure to like spinach and carry his change in a small purse.



THE man who said "Children should be seen and not heard," probably had no idea cinema producers would take him so liberally.



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At last! A wonderful new scientific girdle that improves your appearance immediately and reduces your waist and hips almost "while you wait!". The instant you put on the new girdle the bulky fat on the waist and hips seems to vanish, the waistline lengthens, and your body becomes erect, graceful, youthfully slender! And then—with every step you make, with every breath you take, with every little motion, this new kind of girdle gently massages away the disfiguring, useless fat—and you look and feel many years younger!

Look More Slender At Once!

Think of it—no more protruding abdomen—no more heavy bulging hips. By means of this new invention, known as the Madame X Reducing Girdle, you can look more slender immediately! You don't have to wait until the fat is gone in order to appear slim and youthful! You actually look thin while getting thin! It ends forever the need for stiff corsets and gives you with comfort Fashion's straight boyish lines!

Actually Reduces Fat

The Madame X Reducing Girdle is different from anything else you've seen or tried—far different from ordinary special corsets or other reducing methods. It does not merely draw in your waist and make you appear more slim; it actually takes off the fat, gently but surely!

The Madame X Reducing Girdle is built upon scientific massage principles which have caused reductions

of 5, 10, 20, even 40 pounds. It is made of the most resilient rubber—especially designed for reducing purposes—and is worn over the undergarment. Gives you the same slim appearance as a regular corset without the stiff appearance and without any discomfort. Fits as snugly as a kid glove—has garters attached—and so constructed that it touches and gently massages every portion of the surface continually! The constant massage causes a more vigorous circulation of the blood, not only through these parts but throughout the entire body. Particularly around the abdomen and hips this gentle massage is so effective that it often brings about a remarkable reduction in weight in the first few days.

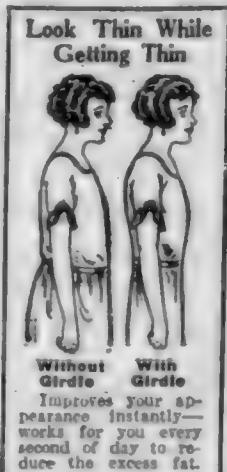
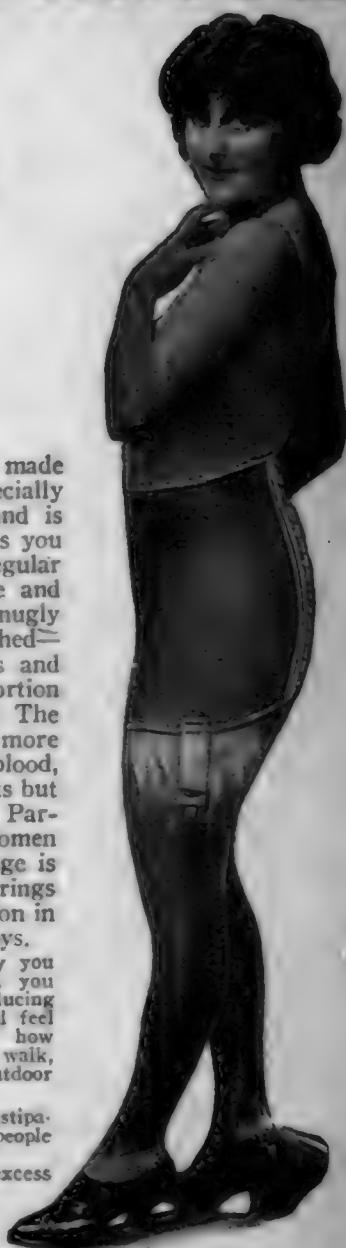
Those who have worn it say you feel like a new person when you put on the Madame X Reducing Girdle. You'll look better and feel better. You'll be surprised how quickly you'll be able to walk, dance, climb, indulge in outdoor sports.

Many say it is fine for constipation which is often present in people inclined to be stout.

For besides driving away excess flesh the Madame X Reducing Girdle supports the muscles of the back and sides, thus preventing fatigue, helps hold in their proper place the internal organs which are often misplaced in stout people—and this brings renewed vitality and aids the vital organs to function normally again.

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You can't appreciate how marvelous the Madame X Reducing Girdle really is until you have a complete description of it. Send no money in advance—just mail the coupon and learn all about this easy and pleasant way of becoming fashionably slender. Mail the coupon now. You'll get a full description of the Madame X Reducing Girdle and our reduced price special trial offer. THE THOMPSON-BARLOW CO., Inc., Dept. G-1205, 404 Fourth Avenue, New York.



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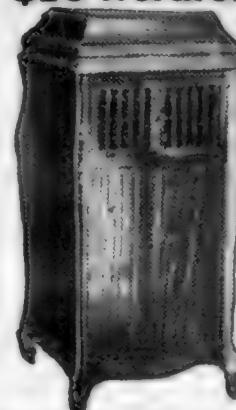
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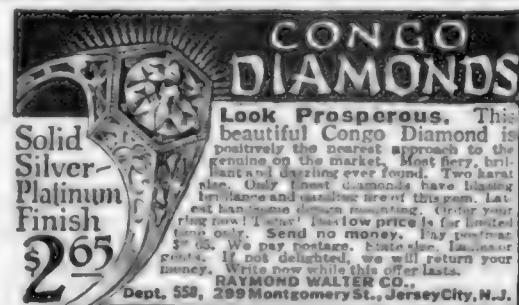
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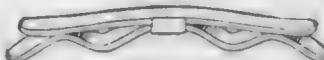


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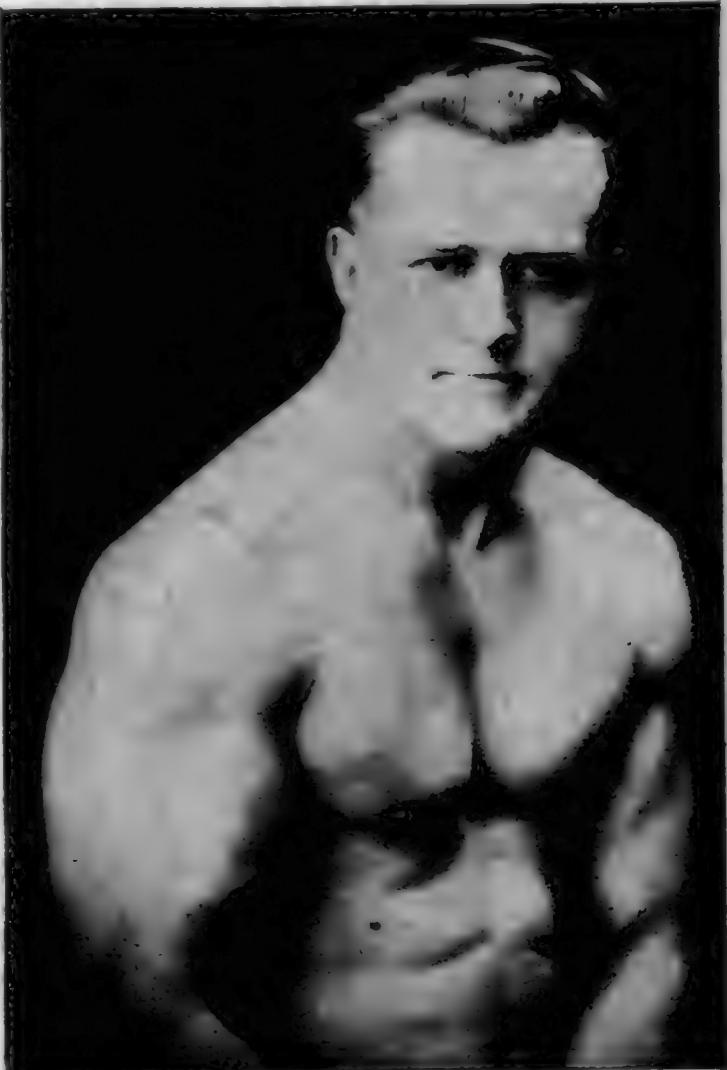
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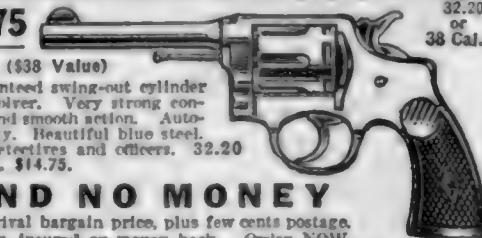
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